GROWING ARMY CHAPELS THROUGH FAITH-SPECIFIC SPIRITUAL FORMATION

A THESIS-PROJECT

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Dedicated to my loving wife, Heather Jo, who has provided much encouragement and ministry wisdom to me throughout this journey.

You are the best.

Not one of all the LORD’s good promises to
Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

—Joshua 21:45 NIV

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PREFACE

After almost two decades of chaplain ministry and close to four years deployed or stationed overseas away from home and the local church, I have concluded this about soldiers: when pressed on the matter of religion they are more religious than the statistics show. I have also come to realize they have beliefs in common. Their religious unawareness stems from believing that religion is too taboo for the public square and believing it should be avoided at work. This understanding has led me to believe, as a practitioner, we need to create new spaces for religious connections based on deep convictions. As I embarked upon this journey with these observations, I realized that in order for practitioners to continue to see spiritual transformation in the lives of soldiers, which replicates into the next generation of called saints and ministers of the Gospel, we will need to carry out a more effective ministry. I am dedicating my work to our Christian collective hope in Christ who keeps and sustains His church and my personal hope that all military and civilian Gospel practitioners will be challenged to create new transit-stations for spiritually-minded soldiers to find each other so they do not become lost or alone anymore, but may continue to thrive together through more common belief and practice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my four children, Ezra, Liam, Ellanor, and Grace, who followed along with us as we carried out the call of God upon our lives of service to our Savior. Special thanks to Dr. Tom Vann for not letting me give up on this passion of mine, and who, by his own personal witness and ministry, showed me a steady, God-glorifying, biblical model for church/chapel ministry. A hearty thank you to those former mentors and pastors: Greg Plott, Michael Goodman, Scott Beebe, and Mike McQuitty, who invested in me in my early years of calling and ministry.

ABSTRACT

This thesis-project explores how Army chapel programs can leverage faith-specific spiritual formation (catechesis) to increase religious activity among soldiers and their families. The thesis-project's stated purpose is to intentionally engage in faith-specific (Baptist-focused) spiritual formation within an Army chapel to determine if congregants and community members would engage and if the group would grow numerically. This project predominately spotlighted a twelve-week formation class that met between August and December of 2019 at Moffett Field Chapel, Mountain View, California. The scope was focused on an implementation within an umbrella of Protestant chapel services/programs in the Army.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

If his denomination has either a creed or a confession of faith, he has a solemn duty to keep his church's faith.[1]

—Mac Brunson, *The New Guidebook for Pastors*

Introduction

The spiritual strength and vitality of every servicemember and government civilian is the goal for every chaplain shepherd-leader in the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps. The Army Chief of Chaplain Corps' Vision for 2029 underscores this importance in that "the Army Chaplain Corps of 2029 will be ready to build Army spiritual readiness by caring for Soldiers, their Families, and Army Civilians, across the full spectrum of conflict. The Chaplain Corps will do this by being a world-class, fully integrated network of mutually supportive Army religious support professionals, who are known for their integral and critical contributions to enhancing the readiness of soldiers of all ranks."[2] This is a worthy goal to pursue as the Army Chaplain Corps seeks to support readiness of soldiers of all ranks to defend the nation and the Constitution of the United States from its enemies, foreign and domestic. In this endeavor of providing support to spiritual readiness of soldiers, the Army has published a new field manual on the entire health of the soldier, FM 7-22 Holistic Health and Fitness, which includes Chapter 10 on spiritual

1. Bryant, James and Mac Brunson. The New Guidebook for Pastors (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2007), 221.

2. Department of the Army. *The Army Chaplain Corps Vision 2029,* Army Chief of Chaplain, last modified January 9, 2022, accessed on January 10, 2021, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/chaplain_corps_vision_2029.pdf.

readiness. The field manual underscores the importance that "spiritual readiness addresses the development of qualities derived from a person's worldview—religious, philosophical, or human values—needed to endure times of stress, hardship, and tragedy."[3] Ultimately, the Army sees spiritual readiness as part of the wholistic plan to keep soldiers fit and ready to complete missions to support and defend the Constitution. Spiritual readiness is also closely linked for the Army to moral and ethical decision-making. Any seminary student knows that simply holding the right knowledge of what is right and wrong is insufficient. There is a need for orthopraxy, the right practice of moral and ethical knowledge.[4] The Army will never truly convert people to moral and ethical considerations that contradict strongly held beliefs about what is right or wrong and the practice of that faith.

This is seen in famously in early Baptist history in Europe. H. Leon McBeth, prolific Baptist Historian and former history professor of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, describes the tension with religious freedom:

> Early Baptists faced severe opposition for most of the seventeenth century from a hostile government and from religious opponents as well. Baptists developed and articulated a doctrine of complete religious liberty for themselves and for all others…the Baptists regarded their views as drawn directly from the Bible and the nature of Christian experience." [5]

The problem for many Christian groups with strong convictional beliefs in the Army is the fact that only generalized chapel services are performed on military installations under an umbrella of Protestantism based on worship style, with the exception of Catholicism.

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3. Department of the Army. *Field Manual 7-22*, Holistic Health and Fitness, 8 OCT 2020, 1-5.

4. Dr. Larry Mercer, "Beyond Belief, Adding Orthopraxy to Orthodoxy," Dallas Theological Seminary, January 19, 2017, accessed on Jan 9, 2022, http:// voice.dts.edu/chapel/beyond-belief-adding-orthopraxy-to-orthodoxy-mercer-larry-a/.

5. McBeth, H. Leon. *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 85.

The term, Protestant, to many in today's society, denotes either a 500-year-old history lesson or the notion of Army pragmatism. It seems the Army lumps most Christian groups together because it is the only utilitarian way to accomplish the religious support mission effectively, or at least that is what the Army would voice. In creating a sort of sacred cow, no one questions or plans for plausible solutions that refute this generalization and, thus, specificity becomes the enemy of the true sense of pluralism. Instead, a Protestant chapel service, after generically being lumped together, is broken up by styles of worship – traditional, contemporary (Crossroads or Chapel Next), Spanish-speaking, or Gospel. Any senior leader-led openness to new ideas and programs should be applied to groups that already exist in the Army, namely Protestant groups, who desire to jointly convene under a stronger doctrine and practice.

The Army's goal of utilizing spiritual readiness to help support soldier readiness in order to carry out the Army's mission clearly expects that gathering congregants by style, rather than doctrine, to be an effective model for developing the kind of spiritual readiness that will best prepare soldiers and families for "stress, hardship and tragedy."[6] I have no doubt that this has led many zealous Chaplaincy and chapel cynics mouthing understandable criticisms about vanilla services out, or services lacking in real theological depth and quality. These cynics also doubt that the Army Chaplaincy is making big enough strides to build up the spiritual strength and vitality beyond what already exists in its soldiers. While not necessarily a bad philosophy, there also exists room for growth if the system would consider applying a more favorable hand to new requests for religious accommodation within both Protestant faith groups and burgeoning faith groups. If the Army Chaplain Corps is truly seeking to prepare the souls of its soldiers, families, and Army civilians within the gates of its military installations to weather the moral and ethical

6. Mercer, 1-5.

corruption of society, as well as the ravages and horrors of future large-scale ground combat operations in unknown lands, it must envision better spiritual readiness within the religious system it manages for the Army. General George Marshall famously said, "the soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul are everything."[7]

Trying to understand why certain Protestant groups are not able to receive faith-specific worship and religious, moral, and ethical education today when the Army budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2022 is approximately 173.0 billion dollars [8], one must examine the problem in its historical setting.

Army Chaplain Corps History

Charting a survey course across the Army Chaplain Corps' history from its founding to modern day helps to comprehend the current landscape. The Army Chaplaincy officially formed on July 29, 1775 by the written decree of General George Washington, who commanded the beleaguered Continental Army as they battled the British Army.[9] The irony of the formation of the Army Chaplaincy is that it formed pragmatically from necessity. Military leaders saw that they needed to improve soldier readiness within the Continental Army. The readiness of men and women to fight the nation's battles was tied to the mission set of the chaplains in the Army. The sermons, prayers, and spiritual conversations always focused on preparing men and women to

7. John Wesley Brinsfield. *Encouraging Faith, Supporting Soldiers: The United States Army Chaplaincy, 1975-1995* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Department of the Army, 1997), 1.

8. Department of the Army. Army Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Review. Assistant Secretary of Financial Management and Comptroller, May 2021, accessed on January 9, 2022, https://asafm.army.mil/Portals/72/Documents/2022/pbr/PBHL%20FY%202022%2025%20MAY%202021_V21.pdf.

9. John Wesley Brinsfield. "Chaplains of the American Revolution: Points of Light," January 15-17, 2020, accessed on Jan 9 2022, www.ncmaf.net/uploads/4/8/5/7/48573933/t3_brinsfield_chaplains_of_the_american_revolution_1776.pdf.

fight and die, if necessary, but to do so from a prepared and strengthened soul. This is arguably one of the key factors to victory. Faith, in a country and its military, is oftentimes directly linked to countrymen's faith in their God and His blessing upon the nation to which they are serving. When faith is lost due to countrymen not believing in the moral and ethical product produced by the country anymore, it has the potential to lead to more and more individuals opting out of participation or involvement in military-led faith practices. It is also conceivable that this lost spiritual faith *in* one's country can irretrievably lead to less faith, hope, and love *toward* the country one is serving. It seems clear that General George Washington understood this concept when he approved the hiring of Army chaplains during the American Revolutionary War against the British. The soldiers of the Revolution needed to hear from God within a context of familiarity that made sense to them. As such, it fueled the Continental Army's ability to brave extreme hardships to accomplish something that they believed was morally and ethically right. In other words, their faith in God, practiced in a familiar and comfortable way under these chaplains, produced a harvest of immeasurable faith in their country's quest for freedom; they became more than willing to endure hardship and death to protect something they cared for on such a deeply held level.

Set up later, the legal constitutional moorings enabling free exercise of religion in the military are highlighted in the protections afforded all uniformed personnel under Title X, Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). The base of authority for the religious support and spiritual readiness of soldiers is found within the U.S. Constitution, which is quoted in the Army's field manual on spiritual readiness. The field quotes the 1st Amendment establishment clause, which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or

prohibiting the free exercise thereof…" [10] While this seems like a justification to keep religion out of the government and out of the Army, this clause, noted in FM 7-22, states that it "is a constitutional bedrock providing grounding for religious support and spiritual readiness. The Army values soldiers' rights to observe tenets of their respective religions, or to observe no religion at all. Free exercise of religion supports the Army mission of sustaining soldiers' short- and long-term readiness, building ethical and moral strength, and motivating soldiers to meet present and future challenges."[11] The first portion of the First Amendment, to the untrained eye, can, indeed, suggest that since government will not do anything to establish religion, Army chapels and chaplains are treading on thin ice by offering a place for spiritual renewal. This belief, however, has been defended at every level within the court system. This includes the Second Circuit Court of Appeals case of *Katcoff v. Marsh* (1985) where the court ruled the military chaplaincy did not violate the establishment clause of the 1st Amendment of the Constitution.

Historical Conundrum

Conversely, in terms of Army chapels, it would be problematic for the government to intentionally create something that does not have an equivalent outside of government. Such a service outside of federal work could lean toward establishing its own brand of religion, possibly creating a faulty, if not dangerous, conundrum. In chapels where theology, orthodoxy, hermeneutics, and apologetics are tamped down in favor of moralism, style, and community, it could easily seem like an established religion exists in Army chapels today, though it is simply

10. Department of the Army. *Field Manual 7-22, Holistic Health* (Washington D.C: Army Publishing, 2020), 10-1.

11. Department of the Army, 10-1.

not one that anyone outside government would necessarily understand or be able to identify. In this vein, some might see cause to usher in a narrower approach for congregants and military families, through the platform of the chapel, to both evoke and meet beliefs at a deeper and more honest convictional level. If the Army wants soldiers and families to be prepared for the stress and hardship of large-scale ground combat operations (LSGCO), it will have to do better at meeting its people closer to where they are in order to strengthen souls for the journey ahead. The more limitations and restrictions senior leaders put on the free exercise of religion in the Army, the less targets they will hit, and the more people will emerge who are not ready to fight with perseverance against the odds. The push to maintain a religious accommodation standard may, in the end, lead to less spiritual readiness overall. The Army, which is tasked with defending the United States, cannot afford to have servicemembers who are unprepared for the defense mission. The First Amendment provides the foundational base for every servicemember to prepare spiritually for the rigors of the role. On the other hand, some would argue generalized moralistic principals do less, but, as a whole, it is better than providing nothing at all. What becomes a better option would be a more tailored approach to Army servicemembers' spiritual needs within the constraints of budget, regulations, and manpower.

Chaplaincy's Legal Moorings

The second clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution establishing the free exercise of religion for all people is foundational support that chaplains can hold to when pursing new paradigms and strategies. There does exist, however, those who are resistant to change even if it better supports the current needs of the soldiers. Those same people see anything which falls outside the current mold as a threat to the institutions, when, in reality, the current mold can

sway the natural outcome of creative minds and bodies who have worked together over time to figure out a better way forward to both meet, and exceed, soldier and family needs. Cultural shifts take place in cycles when there are fewer barriers to ideas and attempts to contextualize the current situation on the ground.

Unfortunately, the free exercise clause is also the portion of the statement that is misused, misrepresented, or even caveated by other regulations most often. Within other statutory guidelines, there can be a backdoor squelching of certain aspects of free exercise. Oftentimes, it happens when the government has a competing interest. For example, if the government is already providing what they consider to be adequate religious support to a particular location, it makes the need for new paradigms superfluous to the mission of spiritual readiness. This highlights poignantly the Religious Freedom and Restoration Act codified in Title 42 of the United States, which states, "a request for religious accommodation from a military policy, practice or duty that substantially burdens any Service member's exercise of religion may be denied only when the military policy, practice or duty that substantially burdens any Service member's exercise of religion and is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest."[12] This regulatory language speaks to religious accommodation for the soldier under the authority of the military leader. The Department of Defense Instruction (DODI 1300.17), which is a statutory document for all branches of service, illuminates the point further by stating, "DODI 1300.17 establishes DoD policy on the accommodation of individual expressions of sincerely held beliefs (conscience, moral principles, or religious beliefs), which do not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, good order and discipline, or

12. Department of the Army. *Army Training Pamphlet 1-05.04 Religious Support and Internal Advisement* (Washington D.C: Army Publishing, March 2017), 1-4.

health and safety."[13] It is the spirit of this and other documents, though, which emboldens forward-thinking chaplains to freely wonder if there are some things they could try to make a greater impact in the lives of their soldiers. Could those chaplains attempt to break the mold of current chaplain programs and services and find success? If they are attempted, however, the question may arise whether or not the government response will claim these things overly burden the government or that they are already provided for under current religious support operations.

Chapel Challenge at West Point

Investigating the statutory historical precedence allowing faith-based groups to freely exercise religion in the military unearths substantial considerations. On July 7, 1972, the *Baptist Press Newspaper* ran an article entitled "Academy Compulsory Chapel Rule Held Unconstitutional." The article provides the bottom-line up as it claims that "it is unconstitutional for the government to require church or chapel attendance by cadets and midshipmen at the nation's three military academies according to the majority opinion of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia."[14] This two-to-one ruling led by Chief Judge David Balezon, Court of Appeals D.C., reversed a decision made two years earlier allowing the service academies to continue the practice of mandating chapel attendance as an integral building block for the entire warrior-leader curriculum. In this instance, most people viewing this ruling today would say the judge upheld the first clause of the First Amendment by deciding that mandatory

13. Department of Defense. *Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1300.17 Religious Liberty in the Military Services* (Washington D.C: DoD publishing, Sept 1, 2020), 1.

14. Beth Hayworth. *"Academy Compulsory Chapel Rule Held Unconstitutional,"* (Nashville: Baptist Press News, July 7, 1972), 1.

chapel attendance established religion and was overly restrictive to cadets at the academies. What this ruling actually did for the military community was to now allow para-church organizations and specific faith or church groups new access to cadets and soldiers stationed at the military academies as well as rescind the unpopular mandatory chapel attendance policy.

New Chapel Opportunities

This seminal decision by Chief Judge Balezon opened the military to more religious specification than the three general chapel services (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish) could provide, making the argument for a stronger Corps of Cadets and Midshipmen. Within a year or two of this decision, Southern Baptists started their own worship service and discipleship program called West Point Baptist Church.[15] In an interview with Rev. Alton Harpe, retired Baptist campus minister, it came to light that his religious-specific program for cadets and cadre lasted from the early 1970s until almost 2010 and restarted again in 2014 before being shut down for good the second time in 2015, citing competing government interest.[16] This ecclesiological and doctrinal work sought to build a winning ministry formula focused on church and doctrinal grounding with a strong regard for the religious authority within Baptist distinctives. It was built on an agreed upon covenant of faith and practice associated with the Southern Baptist Convention and its local, and autonomous, churches. Throughout those successful years of ministry, Baptist cadets, instructors, and volunteer leaders worshipped God in the manner of their conscience, and from an agreed upon theological framework, producing countless senior officers

15. Rev. Alton Harpe, interview by author, New Windsor, New York, May 2015.

16. Harpe interview, May 2015.

and leaders and productive members of the American society who were spiritually ready for life's eventualities.

Chapel Service Not Purely Secular

Interestingly, the initial court filing against the program came from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in 1970 "on behalf of six midshipmen and one West Point cadet."[17] The lower district court ruled in favor of the military academies in 1970, defeating the ACLU and group of midshipmen and cadets. They ruled "in August 1970…that compulsory church or chapel attendance at the nation's service academies was 'an integral and necessary part' of the military training for future officers. 'Its purpose is purely secular, and its primary effect is purely secular,' Corcoran declared."[18] That particular court-ruled attendance was purely secular and did not have religious or faith related implications.

The reality is that that 1970s viewpoint might prevail in monolithic chapel programs today because it came during a period in American history when classical liberalism and biblical contextualization were rampant in theological schools, seminaries, and churches. These approaches to the church, in relationship to interpretation and the Bible, did as much harm to other professions as it did those housed underneath the steeple and bells. Essentially, the court decided the military was allowed to compel its subordinates to attend chapel for non-religious reasons, thus not impinging on the first clause of the First Amendment. While it became a legal

17. Beth Hayworth. *"Academy Compulsory Chapel Rule Held Unconstitutional,"* Baptist Press News, July 7, 1972, accessed on July 12, 2018.

18. Hayworth, 1.

ruling, judges possibly approached the case much like some academics approach the church, Christ, and the Bible, lacking an adequate orthodox hermeneutic. Every distinctively Christ-following body of believers will acknowledge that the Church exists for God's worship through Jesus Christ, not for any secular pursuits. No legitimately Christian orthodox church body would support a church for secular purposes openly, but the government and the judge found a way to support a standing government policy and judged accordingly. Herein, though, lies the challenge facing the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution— that judges and decisionmakers could view a patently religious activity as non-religious to suit its purposes while lacking any civilian support for such a belief or mandate.

While the ruling, in this instance, weighed in favor of the military academies, many outside groups were not satisfied with the decision. One of those groups, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs filed an *amicus curia* [friend of the court] when the case finally was appealed.[19] This companion brief submitted by nine Baptist groups[20] in support of the appeal by the ACLU carries a little levity in the fact that Baptists essentially agreed with the ACLU, something that never occurs. They concurred, here, in that compulsory chapel attendance was never the intent of the First Amendment, rather the freedom of religious exercise without government control or government established religion was. The Baptist *amicus curiae* went on to say, in its brief, "that the government was guilty of misusing religion by requiring attendance at religious services in the nation's military academies. The principle of religious liberty and voluntarism in religion as guaranteed by the First Amendment is jeopardized by the decision of

19. Beth Hayworth. *"Academy Compulsory Chapel Rule Held Unconstitutional,"* Baptist Press News, July 7, 1972, accessed on July 12, 2018.

20. Hayworth, 1.

the lower court, the Baptist Joint Committee declared to the court of appeals."[21] The simple act of allowing cadets and midshipmen to have freedom of conscience and religious liberty to determine when and where they attended religious services faced stiff legal opposition. The presiding judges honed in on the benevolent neutrality constitutional viewpoint. This understanding of the Constitution declares that "all First Amendment rights must bend when they conflict with military interests."[22] In the end, the higher court overruled the lower court and both cadets and midshipmen were allowed to either go to chapel, or abstain from chapel services, for the first time in history.

Courts Allow More Choice

This instance also demonstrates the complexity of the First Amendment in relationship to government and Army interests. It establishes that in the 1970s, when the courts finally decided to allow choice, they also allowed more specificity of faith, instead of simply presenting the general three representative options of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services. The outcome of that ruling provides a basis for examining how Army chapels are run today, by comparing and contrasting institutional ideology on freedom and initiative versus compulsion and utilitarian prerogative. While some might say that the final ruling demonstrated the signs of the times, others might argue that it truly fleshed out a better interpretation of the First Amendment because it led to better outcomes for cadets and midshipmen in their personal ability to make a choice.

21. Hayworth, 1.

22. Hayworth, 2.

What does remain is a complex issue just as the religious demographics of the Army is a complex matter.

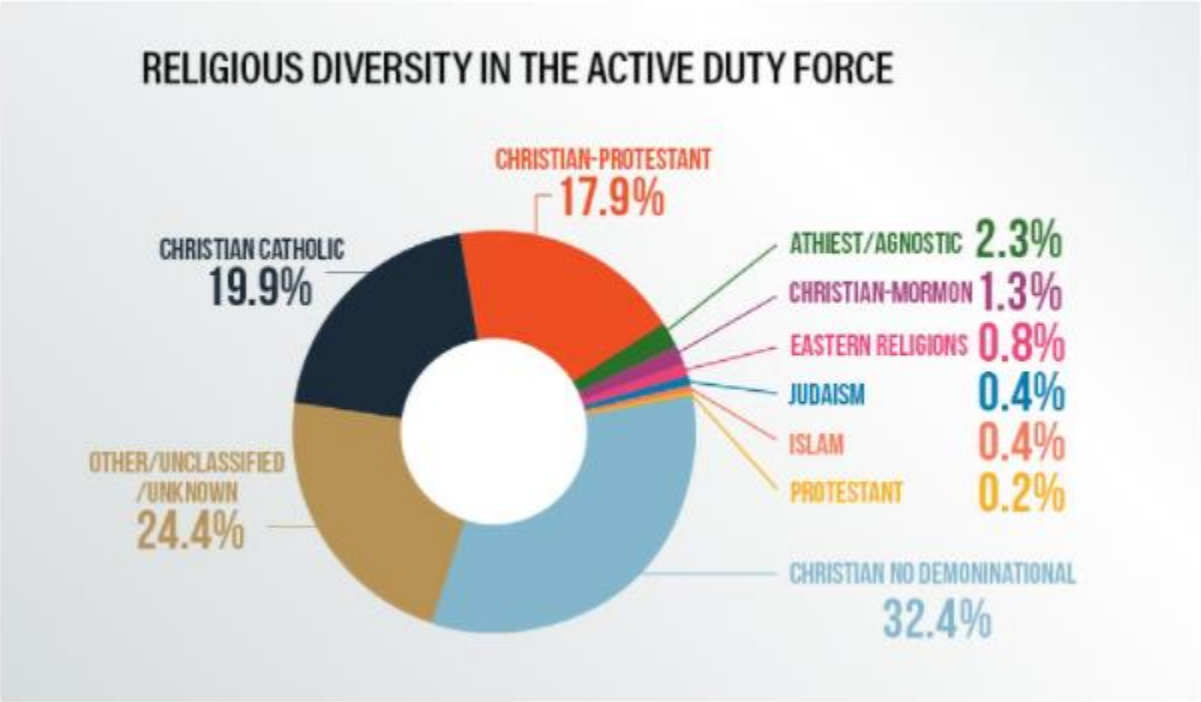
Army's Religious Make-up

There is also a need within this conversation on religious provision with the military to discuss modern-day religious stratification and the provisions being made for a large and diverse religious population with the Army. In a Congressional Research Service (CRS) study in 2019, statisticians found over 70 percent of military personnel claimed a Christian denomination or group as religious preference,[23] which means seven out of ten Army personnel, regardless of race, gender, or ethnicity, claim a Christian religious tradition. According to that same study of the CRS, this stratification is consistent with the religious make-up of the U.S. population. [24] The further breakdown within this large amorphous block of religious preferences classifies as either Catholic/Orthodox or Protestant. In addition, the graph depicts Christian-Protestant (mainline denominational affiliates) at 17.9% and Christian No Denomination at 32.4%, which would include those who do not want to affiliate with any denominational group. This illustration points to how some want to classify Christian Protestants. First Liberty, a non-profit legal organization founded to support Americans' 1st Amendment rights created this graph using Congressional Research Service statistics.

23. Kristi Kamarck. *"Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Opportunity in the Armed: Background and Issues for Congress,"* Congressional Research Service, June 5, 2019, assessed on January 9, 2022, https://crsreports.congress.gov/products/pdf/R/R44321.

24. Kamarck, 4.

Figure A: First Liberty's Graph on Religious Diversity In the Active Duty Force 2019 [25]



Interestingly, the CRS stats do show small increases in religious specification. The trend seems to be moving toward more faith specification. [26]To meet this need, the Army Chaplain Corps does currently employ Army Chaplain Recruiters to recruit towards the Army's religious stratification while also needing to meet a yearly end strength of Army chaplains.

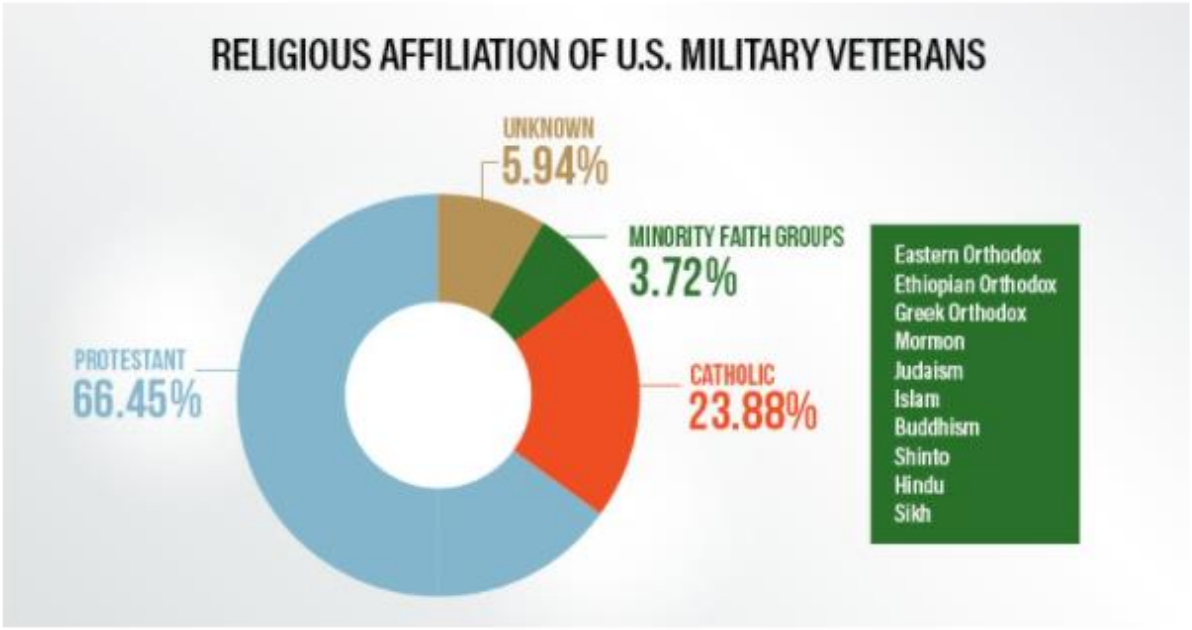
Furthermore, military veterans, who oftentimes make-up a significant portion of Army chapel participation, the statistics are staggeringly tilted toward majority religious. First Liberty

25. Jared Besse. *"How Religious Is Our Military? 3 Ways Faith and Defending Freedom Go Hand-in-Hand,"* First Liberty non-profit organization, July 26, 2019, accessed on January 9, 2022, https://firstliberty.org/news/how-religious-is-our-military/.

26. Jared Besse. *"How Religious Is Our Military? 3 Ways Faith and Defending Freedom Go Hand-in-Hand,"* First Liberty non-profit organization, July 26, 2019, accessed on January 9, 2022, https://firstliberty.org/news/how-religious-is-our-military/.

citing Veterans Affairs statistics [27] shows an overwhelming 90 percent of veterans claim to be religious. Illustration B drives home the point that once servicemembers are complete with active and reserve service, their willingness to admit religious affiliation rises.

Figure B: First Liberty's Graph on Religious Affiliation of U.S. Military Veterans [28]



In terms of a religious provision discussion, Army chaplains periodically query religious preferences of soldiers within the formation which helps chaplains dissect the religious make-up of their entire formation allowing them to forecast future religious needs. In a typical armored brigade combat team (ABCT) manned at around 4,500 soldiers, it is entirely possible to have approximately 70 percent of soldiers claiming a Christian denomination or faith tradition, which includes both Protestants and Catholics. Also, entirely normal is the likelihood that around 25

27. Besse, 1.

28. Besse.

percent of soldiers within a brigade prefer to claim "no-religious preference," "no preference received," "none provided," or "unknown." A query in the fall of 2020 of an Army brigade revealed about one quarter of the force claimed no-preference.[29] Admittedly, these categories make it difficult to truly see the extent to which a soldier claims a Christian tradition since he or she is not willing to share specific information with the Army upon entry.

These non-descript categories have been rising in the first two decades of the twenty first century. In that light, it is still unclear if these "non-choices" or "non-declarations" really mean no religious affiliation. Some believe these omissions are more individual soldier decisions to keep their religious affiliations close to their chests because they believe it could affect their careers or send the wrong message rather than them truly maintaining no affiliation or preference in their daily spiritual lives. Some see open expressions of faith as potentially dangerous to mandating particular religion. Two experienced Army retired leaders at the Army War College, Don Shine and Alexander Snider, penned a professional article on soldier morality and religion. In their article, they highlighted the challenges soldiers face in terms of religion:

> The authors assert, with cogent examples, that Service cultures have become increasingly hostile to the correct expressions of religion, perhaps to the point that soldiers of faith are now intimidated into privatizing their beliefs and thus serving hypocritically as someone other than who they really are.[30]

Privatizing beliefs is leading to more soldiers declaring no religious preference. Refusing to answer fully is a way for incoming soldiers with advancement in mind to distance themselves from complications with religion while in the Army so as to neutralize their position and solidify

29. Statistical analysis of a *Religious Preference Profile (spreadsheet) for Army Brigade Combat Team at Fort Hood by Author*. Army Forces Command (Fort Hood: Army Publishing, October 20, 2020).

30. Don Snider and Alexander Shine. *A Soldier's Morality, Religion, and our Professional Ethic: Does the Army's Culture Facilitate Integration, Character Development and Trust in the Profession?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S Army War College Press, 2014), xxi.

their merit only as to what comes under scrutiny in the climb to the next level of leadership and responsibility.

Religious Preference Profile

Just looking at a standard armored brigade combat team (ABCT) demographic, the religious preference profile (RPP) for that specific unit depicts 53 percent of soldiers claiming a Christian denomination or Christian non-denomination.[31] If one were to add Catholics to the total number, the unit claims rise to upwards of 70 percent coming from the Christian faith tradition, which also includes an almost 1,670 soldiers who claim a Christian, no denomination, preference. This statistical data from one ABCT at Fort Hood supports the Congressional Research Services' study of 2019. While this Christian, no denomination, demographic does not pick a particular denomination, it can be argued that they do, in actuality, ascribe to particular faith and belief tenets, which would line them up with specific denominational groups. Digging even deeper, approximately 2,230 soldiers according to the data fall into what some might call an evangelical, biblical, Christocentric, non-liturgical, morally conservative motif. This is a staggering number of soldiers who, despite small differences in things like church polity, theological nuance, and ecclesiological parlance, lean in the same direction regarding faith beliefs and practices. This is one of the demographic areas where one can see a potential for greater improvements and vibrancy toward soldier spiritual readiness beyond just aesthetic, style of worship, or non-denominational shadowing. The reality is that there are a whole lot of soldiers within an organization who believe very similar things, but do not know it either due to an

31. Statistical analysis of a *Religious Preference Profile (spreadsheet) for Army Brigade Combat Team at Fort Hood by Author*. Army Forces Command (Fort Hood: Army Publishing, October 20, 2020).

intentional or unintentional Army-sponsored pragmatic leveling or grouping. For the right sight picture in the Army's future optical device, it has to find something that will work well enough to keep seeing the target ahead, and that becomes soldier spiritual readiness whenever and wherever America's strategic objectives travel.

Another way the Army prepares for future wars is improving tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) as well as technologies. There are many reasons these changes and/or improvements never take place. Some might argue that there is no reason to fix a Protestant classification system for religious support and accommodation that is already working well. Others, in the same vein, might claim other priorities must come first. Finally, others might add that there was never an overt plan in place within the Army to create these aesthetic choices, but rather, they happened organically at the point of need. Pioneers, dreamers, futurists, and architects know that these types of counterarguments in opposition to looking toward the horizon are both invalid and unhelpful in addressing problems and current paradigms, as they do nothing to spawn practical solutions.

High Demand Low Density vs. Protestant Dilemma

Counterarguments stating that the Army needs to spend more time recruiting and making provisions for high-demand low-density (HDLD) faith groups is unintentionally like playing hide-the-ball. Statistics have shown slight increases in HDLD population groups joining the Army. As a result, Army Chaplain Recruiting has, in recent years, paid special attention to making strides to pursue HDLD faith group religious leaders to join the Army ranks to support these slow rising population groups. While their numbers are sluggishly growing as initial entry

soldiers join, statistics in the ABCT show only 181 soldiers, less than four percent, fall into high-demand low-density (HDLD) faith groups such as Hindu, Islamic, Judaism, Buddhism and two other categories, New Age and Heathen.[32] A couple of decades ago, those numbers would be even smaller than the 2020 numbers. The counterargument of status quo chose to divert away from the "Protestant dilemma" to the "HDLD dilemma." The counterpoint to that argument is that, in fact, 180 soldiers need religious provision according to Title X, under the statutory and regulatory laws and the U.S. Constitution, but so do 3,373 other soldiers, again a whopping 70 percent of an entire formation. These Christian tradition soldiers also need futurist chaplain practitioners to unlock new paradigms for Army chapels and they need programs that will speed and strengthen spiritual engagement and readiness as the Army looks into this next decade.

Now, it is vital to look at the Army Chaplain Corps' Vision (Army 2029) for the entire formation because it describes how military chapels function today. The next decade may look differently if the Army Chaplain Corps' Vision 2029 statement is any indication of things to come. While the last two decades have seen Army personnel in multiple theaters of war, those theaters have predominately consisted of prolonged and protracted low-intensity combat operations. As the Chaplain Corps' 2029 Vision states, one of the keys to success in this type of future, where it could look very different than the recent past is "…the faithfulness of Chaplain Corps members…Regular Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve—to care for Soldiers, their Families and Army Civilians, within a complex and continuously changing environment."[33] Part of that complexity means uncoiling some of the last two decades' worth of

32. Religious Preference Profile, 1.

33. Philip Wright. *The Chief of Chaplains Strategic Roadmap: Connecting Faith, Service, and Mission* (Washington D.C: Office of the Army Chief of Chaplains, 2018).

religious support practices and procedures which originally stemmed from low-intensity combat operations both abroad and at home.

Community Revitalization: Renewed Interest

Previous years were characterized by rapid and consistent deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait for periods ranging anywhere from four months to 15 months, sometimes with only one year in between deployment cycles. Army soldiers were constantly on the go and spent very little time in garrison. Army chapels are typically positioned in garrison at the stateside post or installation, so when soldiers were in garrison in between deployments, they were reintegrating, refitting, training, traveling, moving to another duty station, or preparing for the next deployment iteration and chapel attendance was not a priority. While attendance at Army chapels did not completely flatline during these years, some pragmatic aspects took hold. One aspect of those years was keeping things simple and straightforward. The solitary soldier's ability to plug-in quickly to this Army chapel program may have been missed simply due to timing, but it also did not help the soldier that Army chapels were, and still are, a revolving door of chaplains leading services for six months or a year before leaving for overseas destinations or new roles. This cycle became the norm across the entire Army chapel formation. It was rare in that time to have a senior pastor for more than one year at an Army Chapel. These constant changes due to the operational tempo (OPTEMPO) led to straining continuity and resulted in volatile gains and losses in chapel participation. These changes also led to simplified structures and systems that anyone could take over quickly while also being able to transfer over just as quickly to the next chaplain coming into the role. While necessary for the overall Army mission

and strategy, these changes probably missed some opportunities to strengthen the transitional soldier's spiritual life.

The civilian church movement away from in-house religious education and training to small group dynamics did not help some aspects of chapel activity and vibrancy either. While some people really enjoyed meeting in peoples' homes, others were turned off by the prospect of attending religious education in a stranger's home. They preferred the twentieth century motif of Sunday School or Bible fellowship at the chapel. Some of the community engagement and accountability fell by the wayside as programming disappeared into residences, or just disappeared in general, due to the times or lack of complexity and strategy.

Interestingly, religious education numbers, an important statistic for pastors and disciple-makers within Protestant theology and practice, were taken off or marginalized on many chaplain reports that were sent to chaplain bosses. Counseling numbers were the new litmus test for the effectiveness of the chaplain. The amount of time spent in counseling delivered the message to leaders that the chaplain was engaging with soldiers. While counseling numbers are made up of informal, and formal, counseling sessions both in the office and in the workplace, religious education is usually derived from fixed programming with a fixed date and time. Arguably, religious education requires more advanced pastoral and theological training than any other chaplain professional opportunity offered by the Army. What a single chaplain can affect by telling one person three times over in five hours, he or she can exponentially affect when sharing with groups of five or fifteen in a shorter time frame.

Teachings of Christ

Jesus Christ himself used three techniques for teaching different groups while using parables as his main source of instruction. He used: (1) the well-known discipleship model with the twelve, (2) open air teaching/preaching to different size groups, and (3) practical displays with follow-up explanation and application from life. The future realties of the Army's wars and military operations will require greater exposure of these same methods of teaching to larger numbers of soldiers. Where a surgical tool was once requisite for a single patient, to dive deeply into the body to expose the wound to fix it, the new requirement will expect a bottle of aspirin to do the same job, but rather more widely spread over a greater quantity of stress and strain in a larger multitude of soldiers. Where counseling involves a counselee's immediate problem and feelings, purposeful religious education, through teaching and preaching, engages chaplain practitioners in intentionality and application for a wider reach of people. There is a potential for greater impact, exposure, and influence in the lives of the soldiers when this can be practically instituted.

Chaplains Are Spiritual Formation Teachers

The religious providers themselves, the chaplains, are an important group to analyze. The U.S. Army's largest constituency of chaplains comes from a Baptist or Evangelical Non-Denominational background**.** The primary minister, strategic leader, and planner within Army Chapels is the Army Chaplain. Within the Army, there are two basic types of chaplains, unit-based chaplains and garrison-based chaplains. Unit based chaplains provide religious support at any of a myriad of units: Infantry, Medical, Aviation, Transportation, Armor, and so forth. If

their unit deploys to another country, usually that chaplain deploys, too. They pick up their chaplain's kit, chaplain's field altar, hymnal box, and Religious Affairs Specialist (RAS) and follow the unit in order to provide religious support. According to Army Regulation 165-1, one of the primary areas of responsibility, but not sole responsibility, is unit, command, and/or organizational religious support.[34] In the execution of that endeavor within the unit, an Army chaplain provides for the nurture and practice of religious beliefs, traditions, and customs in a pluralistic environment to strengthen the religious lives of soldiers and their families. Chaplains conduct religious programs and activities for the command and provide professional advice, counsel, and instruction on religious, moral, and ethical issues.[35]

What Chaplains Do Not Do

As an aside, it is also helpful to understand the things Army chaplains are not required to do as religious professionals, by Army regulation. The list includes the following duties: "athletic, recreation, drug or alcohol, suicide prevention program manager, graves registration, welfare, morale, unit victim advocate (UVA), sexual assault response coordinator (SARC), dining facility, personal affairs, information, education, human relations, equal opportunity, casualty notification officer, prisoner escort, safety, survivor assistance, or civil affairs officer."[36] Furthermore, Army chaplains are not military judges, trial counsels, defense counsels, financial liability investigating officers, investigating officers or members, or advisors to investigative

34. Department of the Army. *Army Regulations 165-1: Army Chaplain Corps Activities* (Washington D.C.: Army Publishing, July 2015), 17.

35. Department of the Army, 7.

36. Department of the Army, 18.

boards of officers.[37] The significance of listing the things chaplains do not do, according to regulation, is that without these ever expanding military officer duties chaplains can more easily focus on pastoral and spiritual leadership. This is supported by another statement in the regulation which posits that "chaplains are authorized to conduct religious services, rites, sacraments, ordinances, and other religious ministrations as required by their respective distinctive religious tradition."[38] In focusing on what they do not have to do, chaplains can more easily focus on the aspects of ministry for which they have been trained.

A Chaplain's Distinctive Faith Tradition

The key statement here is found in *distinctive religious tradition*. The distinctive religious tradition of a Southern Baptist chaplain is often described as congregational and democratic, autonomous, scriptural, Christocentric, and baptistic. These are a few basic Baptist distinctives that should prevail within every Southern Baptist chaplain. Elaborating, any convictional Southern Baptist chaplain should believe that every other chaplain should similarly express a distinctive religious tradition for which a civilian religious group sent them into the Army. To this point, the regulation on army chaplain activities states that "chaplains will not be required to perform or participate in religious services, rites, sacraments, ordinances, and other religious ministrations when such participation would be at variance with the tenets of their religion or their endorser policies."[39] The system currently supports the distinctive religious traditions of

37. Department of the Army.

38. Department of the Army, 19.

39. Department of the Army, 19.

chaplains. The caveat for the Army is that its chaplains must be able to sponsor religious activities that are outside of his/her distinctive religious tradition as they believe sponsorship of said event is not implicit participation.[40] As the primary conduit for religious activity in the unit, the chaplain walks a tight rope between his or her distinctives and sponsorship of other religious activity that falls outside his or her distinctives. While this act is happening in every unit, other religious activity is taking place at the Garrison Chaplain's Religious Support Office.

Wearing Two Hats

In a slightly nuanced sense from unit, command, and organizational chaplain support, the Garrison Chaplain also focuses on providing and managing religious support to static Army chapels and chapel communities. The Garrison Chaplain's typical job description is that he or she will develop a coordinated effort which best addresses the religious diversity of the soldiers and families assigned to units and organizations as an installation with supervision of chapel programs and integrating UMTs (unit ministry teams) from tenant organizations.[41] Implicit in this description is the task of ensuring proper representation at Army chapels and their programs using the tenant unit ministry teams or unit chaplains. This role is well-understood by Garrison Chaplains. The problem is in the execution of the utilization of tenant unit chaplains which fails to maximize the panoply of chaplains' religious distinctives in providing the best coordinated effort to address, as the regulation states, "the religious diversity of soldiers and families." [42]

40. Department of the Army.

41. Department of the Army, 15.

42. Department of the Army.

There are reasons tenant unit chaplains and religious affairs specialists are not utilized in a more coordinated manner to maximize religious diversity, but this will be addressed more fully in a later chapter.

Revolving Door

To compound the problem of under-utilized religious professionals with distinctive religious traditions, military installations see these religious providers coming and going every one to three years. Depending on the needs of the Army, some chaplains may not stay at an installation more than a year. The revolving door of chaplains in and out of military installations make consistency of worship, teaching, and doctrine difficult to maintain. A chapel congregation may receive a chaplain who is more aligned with many of the chapel congregations' beliefs and preferences only to lose him/her after a short period of time. The replacing chaplain could very well be from a different theological and stylistic background. The chapel service filled with mainly conservative evangelicals who ascribe to a believer's baptism may receive a chaplain who practices infant baptism and who does not believe in the sole supremacy of Holy Scripture over all areas of life and practice. This revolving door of chapel Officers-in-Charge (OICs) has improved over time as the operational tempo has slowed, but unit chaplains, as always, are susceptible to stints away from garrison chapel programs. In addition, the Garrison Chaplain's religious support office does house a support staff of chaplains and religious affairs specialists, but this staff carries out a comprehensive list of religious program requirements anywhere from maintenance on buildings to balancing budgets.

Various Protestant Chapel Services

It can be argued that the Army Chaplain Corps currently divides Protestant religious services using one primary method – aesthetics. In this vein, Protestant services are categorized by style, tradition, appearance, function, and feel. On many installations the Protestant services are known as the Traditional, the Contemporary (Chapel Next, Crossroads), and the Gospel services. On larger installations, a liturgical service is provided to cater to congregants who desire a liturgical style of worship. In addition, where there is a large enough Spanish-speaking or Samoan community, those installations have services which cater to those groups as well.

Traditional Service

The current traditional service developed out of the old General Protestant service of the 80s and 90s. This service is indicative of hymns, the use of a bulletin, professional dress, a choir, and is a favorite of retirees because it favors a conventional style prior to the contemporary movement. Many believe it is fading into history with the passage of time. The Army Chaplain Corps still provides chaplains to lead this service at every post even as numbers dip due to a lack of young family involvement and multi-generational support.

Contemporary Service

The Contemporary (Chapel Next, Crossroads) service is arguably the newest organic and grassroots service to develop within Army chapel systems. There is a great affinity for this reminiscent-of-the-90s service which came out of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Affectionately

known as the “center of the universe,” Fort Bragg is loyal to its branding. As many people filtered in and out, the word spread on this newer type of chapel service and it was very well received. In that light, most people attribute the start of this genre of service to Fort Bragg, where some futurist thinking airborne chaplains began a new service to cater to people who preferred a more relaxed worship environment. They relaxed some of the formalities and encouraged a more casual come-as-you-are clothing standard. Over time, this Protestant Christian Contemporary service spread onto many posts, and, in many cases, took over the primary time slot of 11 AM on Sunday mornings. Without finding any historically extant research on this, I hold the impression that the original architects of the Chapel Next service had a covenant of faith or mission statement. I assert over time the respective posts who copied this approach did so in name and adjusted the chapel theology and practice to meet their local needs. It appears they started Chapel Next services without any foundational documentation from this original service. Essentially, it took on the appearance of the original service, but there is little proof of any doctrinal or convictional framework other than the aesthetic value attributed. Eventually, the contemporary service became the dominant service on most posts within the Protestant set of chapel services. This may be changing slightly now as other services, like the Gospel one, attract a wider berth of congregants, but, in general, the contemporary service has cemented its place as an Army chapel staple in the primetime slot.

The types of congregants who attend the contemporary or Chapel Next style service varies wildly and it is hard to pin down convictional beliefs. While there may be more and more retirees joining this service yearly, depending on when they retired, the active-duty personnel living on-post remains high at this service. The question of what this group of congregants have convictions about is hard to identify. In general, it can be said that these congregants value Jesus

Christ as Lord and Savior, value people living in community (strong volunteerism rate), and value vibrant contemporary worship and music style over a less formalistic atmosphere. In these ways, the Chapel Next service differs from the Gospel service.

Gospel Service

The Gospel service has a long and illustrious history within the Army chapel system. Many old timers believe the Gospel service traces back to segregation, and then desegregation, within the Armed Forces. This service, more than any other, probably developed out of a moral and ethical dilemma which faced the Army. With the integration of African Americans into the Army ranks, Army chapels were to integrate as well. The Gospel service offered today, to all Army personnel, has a strong African American history, tradition, and participation. While historically, many of the attenders were from African Methodist Episcopal or Baptist backgrounds, other groups like Seventh Day Adventists and other charismatic/Pentecostal groups have found a home in today's Gospel service. The service is usually at least an hour and a half long, characterized by strong preaching, robust gospel music, and fantastic hospitality to newcomers that includes potlucks and fellowships. They foster such a welcoming atmosphere that it makes sense that this service has grown both in numbers and popularity in recent decades.

Liturgical Service

The liturgical service generally caters to Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Anglicans. While this service takes on the character and quality of the presiding chaplain officiating the service, it

is categorized by a generally prescribed Protestant lectionary approach without the consistency of being run by one single denomination. While utilizing the function of liturgical worship, congregants of different faith traditions adjust to the presiding chaplain for that Sunday or to the de facto liturgical approach chosen to be carried out weekly. This service does not perfectly carry out one denominational approach or liturgy unless the presiding chaplain officiates every week, without break, or unless all chaplains agree to use the same liturgical material. While this service mainly caters to congregants who are used to this high church approach to worship, it is unique in the fact that these chaplains believe this approach is doctrinal, theological, and necessary for proper worship of God. On the flip side, the Chapel Next service chaplain would most likely never believe, or insinuate, that worship must be approached in this way; rather, they would stress that early church Christians formalized traditions and practices for how to worship God within the parameters they were given by Jesus Christ Himself. This slight difference demonstrates how style or aesthetic is just as sacred to some people as the very words of Holy Scripture and another reason why distinctive religious tradition requires space to operate within these vastly different theological views.

The Pragmatic Umbrella

How the Army views soldiers under Protestantism is an important factor in examining chapel growth. A challenging dynamic facing military chapels today is the diverse denominational representation housed under one category – General Protestant. If someone were to visit with Methodists and Latter-Day Saints, would these two groups voluntarily feel comfortable worshipping together under the same roof at the same time when they have such

opposing creeds? Could a core confessional belief somehow get lost in the blending of these two very different faith bodies? These are complex questions with an unsurprising rational answer. The decision to house all Protestants under one roof has always been a decision based upon general order, discipline, and some pragmatism. The military has not been entirely successful providing for each religious group's needs in the level of specification those groups would most likely desire. The task is a constantly moving battleline. The Army physically cannot provide every type of religious service to every type of religious group. This has been the argument throughout the years as people have asked about the methodology of religious provision in the Army. In general terms, all service branches (Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Air Force, Space Force) have settled on providing basic religious coverage through chaplains for the big five: Protestantism (liturgical, non-liturgical) and Catholicism, both parts of Christianity, as well as Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism. Under the Protestant umbrella, there are over 150 endorsers representing a wide swath of distinctive religious traditions.

Religious Military Professional Requirements

The Department of Defense (DoD) has one standard for all approved chaplain endorsing agencies. It is detailed in Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1304.28 which discusses guidance for the appointment of chaplains for the military departments.[43] One of the key requirements is that the religious group attempting to become an endorsing agency has a chaplain applicant who desires to apply for active-duty and has no waivers. In good military fashion, a

43. Department of Defense. *Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 1304.28, Guidance for the Appointment of Chaplains for the Military Departments* (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense Publishing, March 20), 2014.

civilian religious faith group or denomination files paperwork with the DoD. If the applicant meets all the accessions requirements for entry onto active-duty and is selected at a competitive accession board, then that religious group becomes a legitimized endorsing agency as long as it has one in-service chaplain. The Defense Department Instruction (DODI 1304.28) describes the process in that "to be considered for appointment to serve as a chaplain, an RMP (religious military professional) shall receive an endorsement from a qualified religious organization verifying"[44] among other things, and to paraphrase the procedures, that the RMP has a valid endorsement, is educationally-qualified, and has served at least two years post-seminary in a role as a religious leader that will prepare them for an active component appointment.[45]

Endorsing Agents

Notwithstanding the above endorsement and accession requirements, the Army's list of over two hundred endorsing agencies is grown solely by the interest and activities of religious civilian professionals and their respective distinctive faith groups and traditions in keeping with the U.S. Constitution and its subsidiary, Title X, requirements. This means that the chaplains the Army has are the chaplains the civilian population sent into the Army to serve soldiers and families' distinctive religious faith traditions. To use a recruiting term, the activity is market-driven by civilian denomination and faith groups in keeping with the free exercise of religion afforded by the nation's founding document, which does not shape the worship practice of its ranks, but performs and provides for them. There is a clear distinction that needs to be made here

44. Department of Defense, 3.

45. Department of Defense.

at this juncture. The military does not decide which things its soldiers worship or how they are to worship. The military simply upholds the Title X statutes undergirded by the Constitution by developing a process by which civilian endorsing agencies can send their selected religious military professionals into the Army. As was said earlier, while HDLD faith groups have seen some small growth, statistics show routinely that units possess a soldier constituency that is over 70 percent distinctively Christian with almost 50 percent categorized as Baptist, Evangelical, or Non-denominational. With over half the soldier population claiming distinctive religious traditions closely aligned, it is no wonder certain civilian endorsing agencies have seen their chaplain numbers swell in the Army.

Evangelical-Biblical-Baptistic-Conservative Tent

While certain mainline denominations have dwindled leading into this century, other groups have grown in size, influence, and number of churches. With over 15 million members in the United States, the Southern Baptist Convention endorses hundreds of chaplains to all branches of military service. A well-known fact is that the largest evangelical endorser of Protestant-categorized chaplains in the Army is the Southern Baptist Convention's endorsing agency, the North American Mission Board (NAMB), located in Alpharetta, Georgia. Another Baptist endorsing agency, Liberty Baptist Fellowship, located in Lynchburg, Virginia is also growing steadily year after year. Each of these groups have a set statement of beliefs and doctrinal guidelines to which endorsed chaplains agree. Both groups have similar moral and ethical requirements for chaplains. This is a key focal point for it is the reason these groups

continue to grow in chaplain numbers. These folks tend to come from the areas of the country where there is a natural disposition for military service and, naturally, as a result, are also the statistical places from which military chaplains come. Both groups and another Baptist group, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, continue to endorse large numbers of Protestant-categorized chaplains in the Army. Some other evangelical groups include Christian and Missionary Alliance, Calvary Chapel, National Association of Evangelicals, Associated Gospel Churches, and others.

Currently, there are over 200 endorsing agencies who approve anywhere from one to hundreds of chaplains across all branches of military service and civilian sectors. Each chaplain agrees to represent the denominational or endorsing group who, in return, provides credentialing for the chaplain. At any point, a chaplain may be pulled from military service if the endorsement is suspended for breaking the endorsement covenant agreement.

Pastoral Identity and Convictions

At their core, most chaplains hold to a set of religious convictions that inform and color their ministries in the military. These convictions are central to the effectiveness of each chaplain as he or she is true to the tenets of their faith and to the exercise of his/her calling. A recent doctoral dissertation entitled, "Spiritual Mentoring and Pastoral Identity," CH (COL) Doug Ball delves a little deeper into the waters of chaplain development and pastoral identities. He says that "Chaplain Corps faces an internal identity struggle with three or four chaplain identities in play."[46] Several chaplain identities that culturally pressures chaplains to conform into are the pop

46. Doug Ball, "*Spiritual Mentoring and Pastoral Identity*" (Doctor of Ministry thesis, Denver Seminary, 2019), 164.

psychologist, the life coach, the social worker, or the staff officer. Dr. Ball shares that "the pastoral chaplain primarily participates in God's work to mature both the individual and the corporate body of Christ."[47] This metaphoric gravitational pull to incorporate other identities, as Dr. Ball describes, oftentimes confuses, and demotivates, chaplains who have a strong pastoral identity. The pastoral identified chaplain is typically a strong ministry programmer within his unit or organization, but if mission priorities and command decisions change, those take priority. This is always the risk for the pastoral identified chaplain. His or her ministry programs will have to give way to Army priorities and movements. In the church setting, ministry programs come and go, but not as often as within the Army, and usually, only after much deliberation and prayerfulness. In the Army, a chaplain must abide by the commands of the commanding officer and his or her intent. How a chaplain feels about their chaplain ministry approach is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to a chaplain's deeply held convictions and has no authority when the commanding officer's own orders come through.

Dr. Ball's research interviewed approximately 150 chaplains currently serving in the United States Army. Using a voluntary survey, the army chaplain asked participants to rank their chaplain activities, vis-à-vis priorities versus actual reality. On this subject alone, solely focusing on how a chaplain views the importance of certain aspects of the chaplain ministry duty description, the uncovered data is quite interesting. The study found that these chaplains ranked worship services as priority number one. Numbers two through four were similar in that formation, discipleship, and preaching followed, in that order.[48] Essentially, these chaplains

47. Ball, 9.

48. Ball, 168.

viewed their priorities of chaplain ministry to be the same activities that they would conduct within the local church.

Conversely, the survey also fleshed out the actual felt reality for each chaplain. The felt reality did not reveal any pastoral identified activities, but rather disclosed that staff work ranked number one, followed closely by counseling and soldier/family support. After those three reality activities came crisis ministry.[49] Through this, Dr. Ball exposed one of the felt tensions within chaplain ministry today, the tension between personal identification versus Army cultural pressure to conform. In many ways, this dilemma is theological and foundational for many chaplains. The theological convictions they hold, which are supported and affirmed through the local church and enumerated within Army Regulations, pushes them to want to pursue personally identifiable priorities for chaplain ministry. They believe this pursuit is more effective at building spiritual strength within the Army than anything else.

Statement of the Thesis-Project

In summation, this project-thesis centers on the subject of spiritual formation and religious educational training working within chapel programs at U.S. Army installations. The subject group is Baptist/Evangelical/Theologically Conservative chapel constituents (caregivers, congregants) represented in the U.S. Army. As part of the project, I led one practical ministry program focusing on Baptist/Evangelical/Theologically Conservative didactic religious formation and worship form August 2019- March 2020 (Mountain View, CA). This effort was successful and grew over the time that it was implemented. This thesis-project delves into

49. Ball, 168.

understanding specialized religious worship and training in Army Chapels and military communities. The question that is explored, and hopefully, answered here, is how to effectively implement a new Baptist/Evangelical/Theologically Conservative specific worship and religious education component into any Army chapel system which will lead to an improved practical, sociological, and theological experience for the soldier who holds to those tenets of faith. Essentially after asking that question, three more questions must be answered. First, is this approach practically easy and effective enough to implement within an Army chapel program? Secondly, does this approach do an effective job of bringing military personnel together in a way that meets Army priorities of influence? Finally, does this approach respectfully champion the First Amendment, including both clauses, and respect the convictions and distinctive faith traditions?

CHAPTER TWO:

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Today, in the name of tolerance, the uniqueness of Christ and many defining doctrines of Christianity are being attacked as never before. Under such pressure it is easy to flirt with theological ideas that are disloyal to Christ. [1]

—John Lennox, *Against the Flow*

Introduction

To answer the questions of Chapter One effectively, one must look at the biblical and theological foundations undergirding the thesis-project, which will demonstrate key arguments for pursing a more refined religious accommodation for the Baptist, Evangelical, Conservative, Non-Denominational faction of Army needs.

Character and Quality of God

All theological foundations in Christian orthodoxy start with God. For the purposes of this discussion, referencing the New International Version (NIV) Bible throughout, it is important to begin with the Creator of the universe, God Himself. Genesis says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth…Then God said 'Let Us make man in Our

1. Lennox, John. *Against the Flow. The Inspiration of Daniel in An Age of Relativism* (Oxford, U.K. Monarch Books Publishing, 2015).

image, according to Our likeness'... '' [2] The church is taught that God created the earth and man so that He could have relationship with them. It is also accepted that man is created in God's image, or *imago dei*, and within this, God both oversees man and is in charge of man. Man's responsibility is to know and obey God, follow His laws and decrees, and worship Him as God. A faithful follower of God will try to obey Him and the things that He has asked His creation to live out. This quest should consume the individual and be played out in the family. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 highlights the devotion God commands from His creation to:

> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

This passage informs the reader that when Moses met with God, it was God who directed him to teach the commands, decrees, and laws to the people of Israel. Moses informed the people of Israel that if they obeyed God's directives and feared Him, they would enjoy long life, and this truth was reiterated throughout his life as well as throughout the Old Testament. This foundational truth is the heart and spirit of God as Creator, Lawgiver, and Sovereign Authority over all the earth. In verses 13-16 of chapter 6 in Deuteronomy, Moses tells the people not to follow other gods, the gods of peoples around them, and they were also not to put God to the test.[3] God's chief end, from a theological standpoint, is His name, His renown, and the worship of Himself throughout all nations and for all times. The Scriptures depict how followers of God in Christ are supposed to worship and teach others how to do the same. In the book of Joshua

2. Genesis 1:1& 26.

3. Deuteronomy 6:13-16.

chapter 1, Moses' replacement, Joshua, tells God's people to meditate on the book of the law both day and night. He tells God's people not to turn from the law Moses gave them, neither to the right nor the left.[4] These Scriptures describe an uncompromising devotion to God's edicts against all other influences that God's people could face.

Unchanging God

In Millard Erickson's systematic theology work, he describes God as self-existent and immutable.[5] These two attributes of God are paramount to the discussion about new paradigms in Army chapels because essentially, God is not derived from a source outside Himself; He has always been and always will be. He is not something or someone who can change which reflects His immutability and unalterable character. Those chaplains who ascribe to process theology would be those who struggle in a setting where God is unchanging, constant, yet not passive. Chaplains of the process theology bent, which there are many, believe God is evolving with creation. C.S. Evans states, "Process theology rejects the classical picture of God as immutable and transcendent in favor of a God who is partly evolving with and in relation to the created world." [6] Essentially, most liberal seminaries and denominations teach process theology in systematic theology. Christ's followers are directed to tap into the Source of all things, which is Him. Those who follow God are encouraged to stay the course, instead of veering to the left or right, into things that God is not. God's truth does not change. The world's truth, however, may

4. Joshua 1:7-8.

5. Millard Erickson. *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), 305.

6. Evans, C.S. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 97.

change about God and what He allows. This very basic fact makes those who believe that God's truth can change and those who believe God's truth will never change practically incompatible within the same worship service. On His unchanging nature, a vast chasm between people is created simply from one facet of God's nature and attributes.

Chaplain Theological Agreement

Milliard Erickson's work, *Christian Theology*, is widely used among Conservative, Baptist, Evangelical, and Non-denominational religious groups and is accepted as a doctrinally sound work and is where much of sound doctrine is fleshed out. In the opposing court of thought, there is a concerted agreement that if God could change, then, as the world changes, God could also change to fit the appetites of the world out of, in theory, a sense of love for His Creation. This faulty supposition counters the claim of His immutability and those who hold to that doctrine. Similarly, the teaching of universalism allows for God to save all of His creation even if they do not choose Him during their lifetime, another problematic teaching to those who see God as unchanging in His nature and ways. Unfortunately, institutions making decisions for the sake of uniformity, without true theological unity, are all too common practices in ministry settings. It leads to ill-fitting liaisons and unsound practices simply based on something as seemingly small as a single attribute of God.

There are certain faith groups (conservative Baptists, conservative Presbyterians, conservative Methodists, Bible Church, Calvary Chapel, Non-Denominational Churches, Christian Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed, Assembly of God, Church of Christ) who are led by chaplains who attended seminaries, studied, and have come to understand theology in

similar ways. It can never be said these groups are always lockstep in agreement, but oftentimes, they do have a great deal in common. Their theological similarities are a place to rally for worship and spiritual formation. Oftentimes, seminaries use similar teaching materials. If seminarians from Baptist seminaries, non-denominational, and Presbyterian seminaries use the same textbooks, then it might stand to reason that they agree on many theological points. These like-minded groups will, essentially, speak a similar theological language which becomes important as one looks for ways to join like-minded congregants and ministers together to engage in Christian ministry.

Drafting Theological Statements of Agreement

Even now, Chaplain leaders are asking chapel pastors and staff to consider drafting theological statements of belief. In January of 2022 at Spirit of Fort Hood Chapel, seventeen chaplains from Chapel Next drafted a theological statement of faith for the chapel service. It was approved by the Congregational Advisory Council the following month. [7] These statements are intended to steer like-minded ministers and congregants towards the chapel services and chapel programs that best correlate their theologies. This new development is encouraging, especially when concluding that this thesis-project could potentially aid in leading the charge toward more clarity of theological understanding within chapel programs. A sample statement from Baptist

7. See Appendix D for Chapel Next's Theological Statement from January 2022 (Spirit of Fort Hood Chapel).

minister, E.Y. Mullins, helps demonstrate what could be a unifier theological statement of certain chapel groups in relationship to understanding God:

> God is the supreme personal Spirit; perfect in all his attributes; who is the source, support, and end of the universe; who guides it according to the wise, righteous, and loving, purpose revealed in Jesus Christ; who indwells in all things by his Holy Spirit, seeking ever to transform them according to his own will and bring them to the goal of his kingdom.[8]

This statement articulates that God is in charge, man should do what God wants, and man comes to understand what God wants through Jesus Christ under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. God makes it clear that His creation is to stand firm in the knowledge of the Son and faith, never wavering when exposed to societal pressures. For every group of believers within the Army who believes this sample statement, there exists other groups who do not believe it. They espouse things like progressive revelation, or a type of supremacy of God's love, which can lead to universalism. Quite simply, it may be that these groups need their own worship and formation within Army Chapels to practice their belief system. The theological issue here, is basically two groups in opposition, one who sees God changing to fit man's experiences and one who views a never changing God through Jesus Christ. [9]

The New Testament evangelist, James, says that through God "…every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."[10] What the writer is claiming is that God knows what He is doing all the time. He birthed Christ-followers through the "word of truth so that followers could become a

8. E.Y. Mullins, *The Axioms of Religion* (Baptists) (Macon, GA: Mercer Press, 2010).

9. Hebrews 13:8.

10. James 1:17.

kind of firstfruits of all He created." [11] James makes a vital point that God does not get smarter as time goes on because He *already has* all the knowledge and power He will ever have, and need, in order to reign as the Godhead. When God the Father sent the grace gift of Jesus Christ, He knew for whom Jesus would die— all of creation. Due to His foreknowledge, God does not learn human behavior progressively as some Christian groups try to argue. He knows in advance who, and what, humans will be and what they will do. There can be a great deal of incompatibility between Christian groups on theological grounds which should weigh into how services and staffs are constructed. Uniformity within a chapel, as a means to promote unity, is more likely prone to exhibit confusion from week to week if not planned carefully. Theological convictions between groups may be more important to attenders than aesthetics and style and should be thoughtfully considered.

Limitless God

Establishing a theological perspective on the omnipotence of God could also easily derail a chapel service or chapel staff. There are Christian groups today who are taught in seminaries that God is not all-powerful, but that He merely created the world and left it to humanity to parse out. Concerning God's omnipotence, some might believe that God parted the Red Sea as described in the Book of Exodus.[12] Others are not apt to believe it occurred through the miraculous power of God. Instead, they believe there is a scientific explanation for the Red Sea

11. James 1:18.

12. Exodus 14:13-30.

parting on its own, and thus, dismiss God's ability to perform miracles. It stands to reason, at a fundamental level, that these two views are completely incongruent with each other. Someone hearing opposing viewpoints week after week may become confused, and possibly frustrated, with the lack of stability of beliefs. Also, those who believe that miracles are simply science unexplained, instead of God's omnipotence, may have a harder time listening to preaching where the great power of God is preeminent. Generally, though, chaplain viewpoints like this are kept discrete for the greater good of the chapel service. Sometimes these tenets come out during preaching and teaching to disastrous results where families and soldiers decide to leave post chapels to find a local, non-military, church where their beliefs more easily align.

The question then becomes: how do chapel communities do any good if nobody agrees on much doctrinally and if chapel services themselves are not arranged doctrinally? Imagine, if contrary to God's orthodox attributes, someone believed in a concept of God who constantly changed, was only sometimes available, was limited in space and time, who forgot what a person did last year, and who lacked the ability to change anything, immoral, unrighteous, false, and unloving. The question might then emerge: would someone actually, voluntarily and willingly, follow that being? These questions prove why the first point needs to be reiterated; doctrinal integrity is to chapel success what the truth of God's attributes is to worshipping God effectively. If one does not know who God really is, he or she will not effectively, or truthfully, worship Him. If chapels want to grow and build greater spiritual strength, they may need to look deeper into doctrinal integrity than within aesthetics and practicality alone.

The goal should be to develop doctrinal components within Army chapel programs to aid in the retention of faith integrity in functionality, both in theological and sociological aspects. Communicating and committing to this renewed focus must fit with the Army's philosophy in

order to be successful. The Army system benefits greatly from simple instructions and applications within its ranks. Practically speaking, doctrinal component injections need to have a practicality and simplicity that will work within Army culture. Army leaders are quick to snuff out plans and programs that will not work for the organization's harmonic goal. Because of this, developing a theological framework that works for the Army is not an easy task. The good news is that there is a renewed interest in building theological agreements within Army chapel programs so there is hope going forward that theological accord could be established. A Garrison Chaplain recently requested that all chapel services draft theological statements of faith. The goal in this request is to help soldiers and families understand the chapel program and how it can benefit them. Another goal is to help chaplains find a ministry home they can support without convictional reservation. Having more chaplains completely on board with a particular chapel service could lead to greater ministry impacts within those services. Theological agreement on matters previously discussed within this chapter may be part of the solution to greater participation within the military community.

Christological Connection

An important rallying point for future Army chapel programs may be found within the idea of Christology. The study of Jesus, as the Christ, is predominant to developing a bigger and more unified theological tent. When factions cannot agree on moral issues, they often can agree on matters related to Christ. Some might say this focus on Christ has already been accomplished with the current worship aesthetics. It is not clear if this has actually been accomplished to its

fullest extent though. The importance of developing a unified theological tent stems from the fact that some may hold to unorthodox views on Jesus. Some might infer Jesus was just a man. They might insinuate he was not fully God *and* fully man; rather, he emerged as some type of phantom. This is a theological problem as well as a sociological problem because it leads to understandable disharmony within a congregation. There are certain truths about God that are non-negotiable because where they become flexible in thought and eventually in practice, theological divisions can cause large ripple effects against unity or lead to a dropping away of committed people.

There are still others who make the claim that the historical Jesus represents truth that followers should try to live out, but through their own power. Basically, they believe that Jesus does not provide believers with any real spiritual power outside of their own human strength. Other groups believe Jesus was simply a historical figure, but at least that is a good starting point of Christological conversation. Orthodox faith and belief are wonderfully described in several creedal documents, which illumine truths about Christ. The Nicene Creed declares:

> We believe…In one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as only begotten, that is, from the essence [reality] of the Father, [*ek tēs ousias tou patros*], God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created [*poiēthenta*], of the same essence [reality] as the Father [*homoousion to patri*], through whom all things came into being, both in heaven and in the earth; Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, becoming human [*enanthropēsanta*]. He suffered and the third day he rose, and ascended into the heavens. And he will come to judge both the living and the dead."[13]

A document like this has been used throughout church history to bring people under one theological roof to great effect. It is curious why Army chapels do not have a more readily

13. John Leith. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1982), 30-31.

available theological statement congregants may attain for a closer inspection like this. The Nicene Creed has withstood parts of two millenniums as a rallying point for Christian groups. There is also room for other contemporary theological frameworks within Army chapels. This push would possibly defend against the perception that what is being produced is divorced of sincerely held beliefs. This is oftentimes the argument chaplains hear from serious Christian soldiers against attending chapel. They see chapel services as giving off the impression of promoting a type of moralism without the backing of religion, creed, doctrine, or faith tradition. This is an understandable concern since the Department of Defense is not a religious organization itself. Its professional ethics and organizational morality are tied to the Constitution, laws, and regulations. Army chapels are not meant to only provide moralistic teachings that sync with current Army policy. Religious houses of worship keep to their theological beliefs regardless of any outside influences as protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution, U.S. Code, and Title X regulatory guidance. I sense a trend in Army pulpits, more and more, that chaplains feel an unspoken expectation that they should keep quiet on certain topics to ensure good order and discipline with Army policy. In general terms, Army doctrine and leadership have been effective at walking the tight rope between policy and religious freedom and liberty. It is becoming increasingly difficult for all parties to continue to act as though religious conscience is desirable within certain settings.

Priesthood of Believers

Another example of discrepancy within the ranks of chaplains and congregants is who can be a minister of the Gospel. In Baptist circles, this called the priesthood of believers. It is important to look at this issue further to better understand why Army chapels should consider

new paradigms to meet spiritual needs more effectively. In a number of faith traditions, every believer who is in Christ Jesus is considered a priest.[14] In other congregations, the ordination process is long and arduous. It often takes years before a person can exercise the modern and ancient priestly duties for themselves and on behalf of others. Some would argue this is not allowed by laypersons. Laypersons are those who are not called, ordained, or generally devoted, full-time, to the Gospel ministry. Confusion takes place in an Army chapel where the chaplain is generally accustomed to carrying out certain priestly roles only to find laypersons administering those duties without permission from the chaplain. Congregants may also experience confusion, as generally acceptable priestly practices, with regards to themselves and others, come into opposition. As Hershel Hobbes, Baptist pastor and author, says about the faith-tradition belief of the priesthood of believers,

> The privilege of priesthood means that every Christian may come face to face with God boldly with no mediator other than Christ. He may pray directly to God in Jesus' name. He can confess his sins directly to God. He can read and interpret the Scriptures as he is guided by the Holy Spirit. He needs no one else to make a sacrifice for him. His sins are forgiven through the one sacrifice on Calvary.[15]

This statement is somewhat at odds with particular church bodies where ordination is a prerequisite to participation in many priestly duties within the Christian church. In chapels, witnessed through the years, there have been instances where lay leaders have been asked to stop their ministry due to a change in senior chaplain or doctrinal difference. Either lay leaders bide their time in waiting for the chaplain to move on or they depart for other places where they might fulfill their calling outside of the ordination process. With so many different theological

14. Hershel Hobbes. *What Baptists Believe* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1964), 71.

15. Hobbes, 71.

viewpoints on ordination and the offices of the church prevailing, it is normal to expect a high level of compromise; that is a hallmark of Army chapel programs. At the same time, though, it does make for some uncomfortable transitions and theological shifts.

The question is, at its core, a theological and practical one: does Christ come to make all members of a body into royal priests, or did He come that only a few would ever experience the richness of serving in His kingdom? The truth is, that within Army chapels, this discussion may linger just under the surface without ever being formally verbalized between Army chaplain and chapel congregant. In theory and in practice, it could be the difference between deep satisfaction for chapel congregants and a deep dissatisfaction with their place within the congregation. It could be the difference between congregational growth and stagnation. It could be the difference between healthy volunteerism in chapels and a lack of volunteers to run chapel programs.

The reality is there has always been a laity movement within the larger contexts of churches and denominations. This issue is different in the military setting only due to the fact that there is not complete agreement within chapels. The priesthood argument focuses on Christ's call to use men and women He calls directly, or indirectly, to carry His message forward. Southern Baptists, for example, believe in this theological truth. Their churches ordain men to Gospel ministry only reaffirming that call of God upon the individual's life amongst a cloud of witnesses. Laypeople and ordained ministers expect that if they come to chapel, they will be allowed to participate in Christian ministry activities. Providing a conducive environment for lay ministers and volunteers is essential to the vibrancy of Army chapels. A simple miscalculation of putting the wrong chaplain in charge of a chapel congregation, who holds a divergent view of clergy and laity roles, could very well become counterproductive. Chapel congregants and chaplains tell tales of ill-fitting chaplain selections due to faith background and

philosophy; they did not mesh and participatory interest floundered. Faith and denominational background are important items of consideration for senior chaplains to make determinations on chapel pastors. When chapel selections do not consider these doctrinal issues and how they will play out practically, they run risk of doing unneeded damage to chapel ministries. The reason it happens is because there are neither written nor accepted rules for how chapel pastors will be selected, due in part to the fact it does not always play into the decision-making matrix of commanding officers. If the role is seen only as a duty to perform to the best of one's ability without thought to what is wise or constructive, then damaging second and third order effects may follow. Wise leaders must understand certain pastors are not appropriate fits for postings in certain kinds of Army chapels. A high church Episcopal chaplain may not fit well with a low church, evangelical, non-denominational congregation who do not have a pattern, or history, of baptizing babies. Unwise leaders might issue the posting to a chaplain and expect them to simply carry out the order because these presented are marching orders. The chapel attendees, on the other hand, are there due to their personal desire to attend and be a part of the congregation. They are not under any known command or order to attend certain chapel services just one that he/she fits well. While congregants understand mission command and mission orders, they are not bound to attend chapel. They, rather, hope for good chaplain selections and oftentimes tolerate ill-fitting selections. It lies within the need for doctrinal congruency, as mentioned above, to try and position where chapels should focus on to improve programs and match services for both chaplains and congregants.

Ministry of Reconciliation

This important doctrinal belief to carry out a priest-like role comes from the Savior Himself. Followers of Christ accept Him as the perfect sacrifice. At the same time, they accept that He has given them a new ability to carry out the ministry of reconciliation within their community. This ministry of reconciliation is critical in the decision of where the congregants are to plant their families. The authority for bringing God and man together in reconciliation is spoken about in 2 Corinthians 5:17 where the Apostle Paul shares:

> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold new things have come. Now all things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Plainly, all believers within a congregation are given the task of being ambassadors for Christ's salvific work for mankind. The emphasis is God's use of every believer toward his mission and the respect for that process between God and human beings. This important work that clergy and laypeople do is simple service in walking people back to God. The problem arises when hierarchical measures are introduced into bottom-up environments. Lay people are the driving force in most chapels today, so when there is a deficiency of volunteers in chapel programs, this generally leads to marginal programs with limited outgrowth. A doctrinal belief like the priesthood of believers is most likely a driving force with clergy and lay people within those congregations. The mission of promoting God's reconciliation with man is paramount and if strong laity see this as missing, or rearranged, in what they perceive as a detrimental way to minister, they are less likely to want to commit themselves to involvement in the chapel's programming.

With such a task before God's ministers of reconciliation, it is no wonder that when asked to stop a particular program or ministry, these individuals leave for some other place because they have a task from God they must fulfill. With a permanent change of station (PCS) almost every three years, Army chapels cannot afford to lose congregants over issues like lay involvement versus clergy prerogative or discomfort with lay led ministries. The effectual calling of God upon a person is something to value; it fuels volunteers and lay involvement.

Lay Involvement

Military lay involvement often includes civilian involvement as much as the military. It involves civilians who are allowed to work on military installations as un-paid and paid volunteers. Arguably, this is an area where the Army Chaplain Corps needs to clarify its position. It needs to provide better, and clearer, guidance within its garrison chapel regulations on lay volunteers. In recent years, senior chaplain leaders have encouraged more dialogue with the local communities where Army installations make their home. Senior garrison leaders were asked by senior chaplain leadership to engage local religious leaders and find pathways for mutual support. One of those natural pathways is opening the post to local and distinctive church volunteers to work on the installation. When many Army personnel live, work, and play on their installation it becomes a necessity for civilians to have installation access in order to reach them. It has become more difficult to gain access due to newer security protocols put in place in the last two decades. Previously, many installations had open access for civilians. Fort Hood, in Killeen, Texas was just such an open post less than twenty years ago. This change makes it more difficult

for local civilians to become a valuable resource to Army chapels and to gain access to posts to work alongside Army chaplains and chapel volunteers. This will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Ministry Multipliers- Parachurch Groups

In addition to local church volunteers, there is another sub-group of civilians who are vital cogs to many Army chapels. These invaluable volunteers and lay ministers are part of parachurch organizations like Navigators, Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru), Intervarsity, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Cadence International, Awana, Officers Christian Fellowship, Valor Cadet and Midshipman Ministry, Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM), Military Community Youth Ministries (MCYM), Bible Fellowship, Gideon's International, Young Life, and many more. Most of these groups have unlocked the trade secrets to working well with Army communities and chapels. Most of these parachurch organizations have long histories of supporting the Army and its people. Chapels have benefited tremendously from the cooperation and partnership with parachurch groups. Many chapels would not be as well run and organized without the help of these civilian parachurch partners. In general terms, this positive relationship flows from a doctrinal belief in the importance of every believer participating in the work of Christ to carry out a ministry of reconciliation within the world. Whether or not these individuals call this doctrinal belief the priesthood of believers does not truly matter for what they believe informs what they want to do within the Army chapel system. It is imperative to support these like-minded families and individuals by ensuring the right chapel construct exists for them supported by the right Army chaplains.

There are several more important truths wrapped up in the doctrinal position of the priesthood of believer that are helpful to crafting the right understanding about clergy and laity; understanding this issue could facilitate either growth or discontentment in chapels. Firstly, is the belief that Jesus is the high priest, as has been mentioned before. The Scriptures depict how Christ administered the final atoning sacrifice by walking the Roman cross to the hill of Golgotha and there dying for the sins of the world. He is both the Priest who administers the sacrifice and the Sacrifice required for propitiation, the satisfying act towards God's wrath toward sin. Under the priesthood of believer doctrinal position, clergy and laity are equal and separated only by time and activity. The only difference between clergy and laity ensues in calling, gifting, and vocation. If the priestly role is now taken from the Aaronic priests with the veil of the Temple being torn in two, theologians believe this act has forever nullified a formalized priestly system. It means many Christian churches have no need or desire to resurrect a priestly system within orthodox Christianity. 1 Peter 2:4-5 describes this viewpoint:

> And coming to Him (Jesus) as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, you (every believer) also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

As Army chapels seek to find rallying points for doctrine, unity, and practice, it is important that clarifying biblical positions on priests, clergy, and laity are fleshed out. With no real difference or class of Christian in the priesthood of believers, the Army chapel leans heavily on vocational ministers i.e., chaplains, who have put aside other occupations to serve and minister to the chapel who are supported by the local church and the federal government. The end state of every Christian believer is to eventually, in heaven, take on a heavenly role like that of a priest. The Christian's earthly role is priest-like in the same likeness of Christ's work in support of His ministry of reconciliation between God and man. The Apostle Peter says of the church, "you

also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."[16] The Holy Spirit provides a seal and safety net for these tasks. The Church watches over everyone and ensures ministry of reconciliation is properly being administered to the community. There is only one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ effectively directing people to this once-for-all sacrifice that Jesus made on behalf of all mankind. Every believer can enter His presence with no mediator besides Christ.[17] What happens when everyone under Christ's banner views his/her life as priestly in the collective effort to see people reconciled to God through Jesus Christ? Simply, it leads to more people participating in the work of the chapel to effect changed lives.

Soul Competency

Another aspect that is essential to the theological framework of this thesis-project is the idea of soul competency. A known rallying point for many Christian groups today is this concept of individual soul competency. It is also known as soul liberty or soul freedom. Theological historians have labeled this a Baptist belief tradition or distinctive. Others argue this is a classic Protestant or Dissenter position. R.C. Sproul discusses human conscience like this:

> It was Jiminy Cricket who said, 'Always let your conscience be your guide.' This is good advice if our conscience is informed and ruled by the Word of God. However, if our conscience is ignorant of Scripture or has been seared or hardened by repeated sin, then Jiminy Cricket theology is disastrous.[18]

16. 1 Peter 2:2.

17. Herschel Hobbes. *What Baptists Believe* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Holman Publishing, 2000), 28-29.

18. R.C. Sproul. *Essential Truths of Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2005), 157.

The soul's competency is dependent upon its ability to know, understand, and apply the truths of God's Word to all areas of life as it is illuminated to that person by God. This belief has been an important aspect for believers to escape sliding dogma and shifting interpretation over two Christian millennia. Without a healthy belief in every believer's ability to accurately understand God's truth through personal illumination, the church is susceptible to the systematic, theological, or practical creeping in of bad theology. While historical theology maps the course to which a theological belief or system has arrived at the present, scholars would most likely agree there are certain concepts, in existence, that have gone too far outside of orthodoxy. The Protestant Reformation is a prime example of a movement to return to the basic teachings of Christianity. Thankfully, there are individuals within church bodies who are pursuing deeper and clearer understandings of God and His Scriptures, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and strive to keep things in check. God informs individuals towards this end. It is part of the role and gifting of individual believers across church bodies. They are to work toward the truth. However, human conscience is prone to error without divine guidance. It seems careless to allow each Christian, under the authority of Christ, to carry out his/her calling without ecclesiastical oversight. The goal is that individuals or members of the body of Christ are being led to believe and practice the same spiritual disciplines and truths.

A key passage of Scripture that discusses in-depth human conscience is found in Romans 14. This chapter discusses how Christians are to consider others when choosing whether or not to use their Christian liberties to partake or abstain from something. Paul, the writer of the epistle, begs the question, "who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand."[19] Essentially, the Apostle Paul

19. Romans 14:4.

indicates that within the church body there are people at different stages of the Christian experience. As such, Paul makes the point that each believer, when presented with a spiritual decision, which is often, "must be fully convinced in his own mind."[20] The distinction is between clearly permissible things and those that are not permissible according to God's laws. If something is permissible, it becomes a spiritual decision before God and the Holy Spirit's prompting in one's heart. If the thing is patently not permissible, then the answer to any believer is obvious in that they are to not only stay away from it, but flee.

Baptists and Religious Liberty

The issue of soul competency and the priesthood of believers have help to identify Baptists' theological perspective for several centuries. Another doctrinal issue that is also strongly Baptist and that has helped shape modern society is religious liberty. Baptists have strongly held religious liberty positions both in the past and today. It should be said, this idea of religious liberty, is strongly embedded into the entirely of this thesis-project, but is not a new concept. The historian McBeth gives insight into the Baptist view of religious liberty. In his seminal work, *The Baptist Heritage*, the author recounts how, John Smyth, a famous Dutch Baptist, believed civil government was expected to act toward the church in the seventeenth century, "that the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of

20. Romans 14:5.

conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form or religion, or doctrine: but to leave Christian religion free, to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions."[21]

Essentially, Smyth, recounted by McBeth, is describing modern day religious liberty and the separation of church and state. [22] Baptists have continued to hold this position to this day in terms of its support for new laws like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993. The idea is that the church is at its best when it is free to express itself without government coercion and disruption. Baptists have believed in this so strongly that they are willing to allow all to worship freely, even those faith groups they disagreed with vehemently. [23] At its core, McBeth argues, Baptists believed, "that the nature of the Christian experience is such that it cannot be compelled or coerced; to be authentic, religion must be voluntary."[24] The theological truth exists that Christian faith must be a voluntary and willing act on the part of the adherent. Religious liberty affords the adherent the most space free of government influence to live out true faith. It also affords every other group the opportunity to free exercise their faith and practice without interference. Just as Romans 13 commands Christians everywhere to obey and submit to their governing authorities they are at the same time realizing that this might come into conflict with those authorities if Christianity were outlawed. Paul is writing to the Roman church to set an example as Christians that the local community respects and appreciates. Yet, it is clear to see that Romans 13 works in its truest form under religious liberty for all. Christians obey the

21. McBeth, H. Leon. *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 85.

22. McBeth, 86.

23. McBeth.

24. McBeth.

civil authorities and at the same time are left alone to pursue religious expression unfettered for the glory of Christ.

Attending Chapel or Not?

It is permissible for soldiers and families to choose to attend service off post. It is also permissible that those people attend chapel as part of the local military community. In terms of theological sticking points, if the most devout congregants are not attending Army chapels due to unstated theological concerns, it will be seen in the effectiveness of the system. This is not completely understood but may eventually be asked through Army-wide spiritual assessment surveys and return a better, and more thorough, understanding at some point. Without this important information, ultimately, though, the Army is missing important data that will help future decision-making. It very well may be that this information is implied. If Army families do not attend Army chapels, then there is a reason they do not. The implication may be that they do not agree with the ministry context so the Army system, itself, may not know how to reconcile theological and convictional dissent. Instead, it may just ignore it and look at the numbers of those participating as a final justification for the way chapel programming is conducted.

Why do Army chapel programs look the way they do today? Common answers are usually given for attendance deficits and generally does not involve anything about theology or convictional belief. Rather, the answer is found in that more and more Army families and single soldiers live off post and further out. They have multiple church options within their immediate vicinities where they are catered to better than previous generations did. The truth of the matter

is that though soldiers might prefer living on post, military housing has long waitlist times and few vacancies. This implies Army installations are teeming at the brim with eligible Army families and single soldiers who may have interest in attending services and ministries on post if housing were available. If Army families and single soldiers avoid Army chapels for theological and convictional reasons, senior leaders should know this and seek to find ways to better meet these desires. The data should lead to exploring new paradigms to meet the needs of soldiers and their families' spiritual and religious needs on post. As stated earlier, the organizational documents emphatically confirm this activity leads to healthy military forces and installations able to sustain people and win the nations' wars.

Authority of Scripture

The next doctrinal issue important to the theological framework of the thesis-project is the topic of the authority of Scripture. In terms of choosing a foundational doctrinal statement to begin a new Army chapel service, the authority of Scripture is a good place to start. Maintaining the authority of Scripture can create harmony among distinctive faith groups and beliefs. Congruence within an Army chapel service requires individuals and families to find a common harmonic note. The authority of the Bible over all matters of life and conscience can level the playing field, ensuring congregants are following the same codes of ethics, conduct, and worship. Groups like Southern Baptists place a strong emphasis upon having the Word of God, studying the Word of God, and knowing the Word of God and thus, preaching from God's Word using a historical-grammatical hermeneutic, becomes an essential part of worship. It values

exposition of Scripture and pursues finding the meaning of the passage in its day. Yet, it also seeks to build the connection to personal present-day application. Preaching which stays close to the hermeneutical understanding of the Scriptures (historical-grammatical) and the sense of the literary text is preferred because it offers less opportunities for misinterpretation. This focus on conveying God's truth from the Bible each and every Sunday stems from a convictional belief that strongly claims the Bible is far more weighty than any other book. It is, quite literally, the words God gave to men to share with the world. A great reverence for God's Word and intentional emphasis within an Army chapel congregation on those words can draw a large net within the evangelical, Baptist, and theologically conservative sphere. Solid biblical teaching and preaching is a common denominator which needs more thought put towards its practical application. More than whether or not individuals feel comfortable in their stylistic surroundings, they are looking for the truth they believe in to be boldly proclaimed. As Hershel Hobbes says, believing the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God [25] is of paramount importance for Baptists. Other evangelical groups also hold the authority of Scripture in high regard. There are some who will visit a service one time, and, if they do not feel that the Bible is given preeminence in the worship, will never return. They see this as problematic in that another Gospel is being taught, something Scripture warns against.

25. Hobbes, Hershel. *What Baptists Believe* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1964), 61.

Moral Considerations

Even more than the problem of devout Bible-believing congregants finding churches off post that champion the authority of Scripture, there is another less talked about issue related to the authority of Scripture. The issue of morality within current cultural movements is an important aspect of interpreting and applying God's Word. For congregants and chaplains who believe in the Bible's authority over all matters of life, this means it effortlessly supplies answers to cultural shifts and movements of change. Scripture applied to modern day issues using a historical-grammatical approach does not always lead to agreement with those shifts and changes. While not all people interpret Scripture in the same way, there are affinity groups who view the authority of Scripture in similar ways. This is an area for ministry pioneers to consider evaluating and improving upon because it could easily have potential as a means of gathering like-minded people together. Army chapel congregants freely exercising their religious freedoms should be able to find safe places to practice God's Word. There should not be topics or passages of Scripture from which chaplains or lay leaders cannot preach. However, there *are* limits to what Army chaplains and lay leaders can preach and teach on military installations. Remembering the thesis-project by Army senior chaplain, Doug Ball, discussed in Chapter one, it surveyed several dozen Army chaplains asking if there were topics that were off limits to preaching in Army chapels. He also asked if they felt constrained in their ministry by Army organization priorities or policies. The reality is that potentially Army chaplains feel they should stay away from certain topics they disagree with that are Army priorities and new burgeoning policies. There should not exist unwritten rules on topics chaplains or lay leaders should avoid. Rather, Army chaplains should be free within the context of their endorsement and calling as a

religious professional to engage any topic God puts on their hearts that will enhance the spiritual welfare of those to whom they are ministering.

Culture tends to often shift on issues and practices while religious groups often stay rooted to belief, dogma, tradition, and biblical truth. The Bible is a central authority for many groups to help them stay grounded as the cultural waves roll in. Yet, it must be said that Army leadership has a governing duty and responsibility given to it by Congress to understand the seas of change and solve problems for all religious claimants. Currently, if Army individuals and families who value the bedrock doctrinal belief of authority of Scripture over all matters of life and practice are not considered more seriously, they will continue to leave chapel life and this will, in turn, lead to less vibrant military chapel communities. Some may say this has already happened in the last two decades. As they sense their families will not receive doctrinally-sound instruction from the worship and religious education, even if they are normally pre-disposed to support the military community chapel, these soldiers will decide with their feet. As the Army Chaplain Corps begins, again, to talk about revitalizing Army chapel communities through an ongoing initiative, it must seriously consider making a sacred space for those who believe in the things like the authority of Scripture over cultural change and champion the free exercise of it.

Within this greater issue of finding a synergistic way forward for both religious dogma and cultural change is the issue of solving the problem of penalty or punitive action against freedom of religious expression. Religious expression must be allowed even when that belief goes against the government's support for a cultural shift in policy. Some may say this is a naïve view, but others claim it is healthy to believe in some form of compromise when two groups have compelling arguments. Solving how the government can allow both groups to thrive, and equally exist, without disadvantaging the other's beliefs, is of seminal importance to the Army's

future. The answer may lie in compromise and in the creation of more theologically tailored religious programming. If a chapel service could uphold an uncompromising belief in the authority of Scripture, that, in itself, could lead to an overall healthier outcome for the organization.

Believer's Baptism

Additionally, it becomes imperative, in terms of the Army chapel setting, to highlight how believers' baptism shapes the Baptist's understanding of the journey of salvation. For those Baptists attending chapel, it is also crucial to delineate why the implementation of paedo-baptism (child baptism) contradicts their biblical New Testament understanding of salvation. Oftentimes, these two groups of Protestant Christians find themselves in the same worship space at the same time. It works itself out because it must, but it offends those who hold strict understanding of how Christian baptism is supposed to be implemented within a body of Christians. The importance of believers' baptism within an Army chapel is a debatable issue to some. But, to those who hold baptism in high regard, it is not merely a cursory issue; it is central to salvation. For example, to those who understand Scripture as promoting baptism as a post-conversion ritual, they consider it a condition to starting the faith journey in the right discipline. Some might ask, in this debate inside Army chapel services, why believers' baptism should be so emphasized if faith in Christ saves all? The answer is not an attack on a person's salvation experience; rather, believer's baptism is seen as an open public act to an inward spiritual reality in the life of the new believer. It is one of the first steps of obedience to Christ after believing in Him.

For many conservative Evangelicals, baptism is an outward public sign of obedience to Christ's way and His commands. It is not the mechanism by which a believer receives salvation, regeneration, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The gospel of Luke, chapter 3, describes God's pleasure at the Son's baptism. A voice from heaven said, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well pleased."[26] This demonstrates that baptism is not an outward act leading to an inward reality as some groups would argue. The evangelist, Philip, came across an Ethiopian eunuch who was studying the Scriptures beside a road. After explaining to the Ethiopian eunuch what the Scriptures meant, the eunuch responded:

> Look! Here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized? And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.[27]

There is an immediacy to this description of believer's baptism. It also comes about after explanation of Scripture, faith on the part of the person hearing the message usually communicated through voicing that belief, and baptism. Anyone who sees baptism as an integral saving component is a person who may want to consider closely the place where they attend service. Those who see infant baptism as a legitimate spiritual act on the behalf of the child will come to a theological crisis of belief with believer's baptism. Believers' baptism underscores the importance of being of such an age to make the faith decision personally before God. An infant is not able to make a faith decision according to those who espouse believers' baptism. Ultimately, in Army chapels, there do exist those who have been baptized as infants who do not

26. Luke 3:22.

27. The Bible (NASB) (Nashville, TN: Zondervan, 2002), Acts 8:36-39.

see any particular reason to be re-baptized as adults. Their understanding is that one baptism is enough. Those who, again, hold to a believer's baptism will firmly decry that an infant cannot make an eternal decision, or at least they are not of the mind to believe an infant has the mental or cognitive faculties to choose to believe in God. To the ardent believer in pre-conversion baptism initiated by parents, it matters in that they believe baptism to be an integral part of salvation. Thus, these baptistic nuances are critical components to worship services so that Army chapel services do not succumb to a philosophy of pragmatism at the expense of a theological clarity. The subject matter and its clarity are always things that should weigh heavily into choosing where to call a chapel home. Convictions and beliefs are an important aspect of how Army chapels should arrange themselves if they desire to take seriously the implementation of freedom of religion and conscience.

Baptists generally believe one can immerse oneself in water, with a preacher officiating, and come out of the water, understood by the congregation, symbolizing a new creation in Christ. They would make the claim that baptism is a significant and symbolic milestone for a new believer that helps to make their faith public, identifies them with Christ who was Himself baptized, and helps start the Christian faith journey in obedience to Christ's ordinance of baptism. They would also consider believers' baptism to be a worshipful experience because it allows the new believer to identify with other believers who have also been immersed. These individuals would not, on the other hand, agree that baptism gives a believer the Holy Spirit or the gift of speaking in tongues. They would never claim that a miraculous event takes place where salvation is imputed onto the officiant. These differences change baptism from a symbol of the salvific work that has taken place, to the saving work.

For many, the act of baptism is more than ritualistic; it is something that should be taken seriously and come from an authentic spiritual response to God's Son, Jesus Christ. There have been historical examples of groups using the ritual of baptism to gain entrance into a target group whether during the Roman Empire's persecution of Christians to the expansive persecution of Christians in China. In order to gain access to the church, false followers are baptized illegitimately by unknowing Christian leaders because these perpetrators said all the right words though, in truth, did not reflect any type of inward spiritual change. The ritualistic ordinance meant something spiritual to those in attendance as they rejoiced in what they thought was gaining a new brother or sister in the faith, but it did not mean anything to the one with poor motives. He/she simply got wet. Many modern-day Christian groups believe baptism can be done falsely or without warrant and they would be right, for baptism should never be undertaken without a strong Christian witness of Christ's salvation in the life of the believer.

Well-known Baptist pastor, Mac Brunson, formerly of First Baptist Dallas and First Baptist Jacksonville, makes the point about baptism,

> Under no circumstances should a pastor baptize a person without first talking with him/her to make sure he/she has been truly saved. This conversation should include going over the plan of salvation once again to make sure the person understands and has assurance of salvation. It is also an opportunity to guard the ordinance of baptism by explaining that baptism does not save a person. It does not wash away sin. Nothing spiritual, magical, or mystical happens under the water. But baptism is something Jesus asks of a person who comes to believe in Him at the beginning of his walk with Christ.[28]

This is a serious concern for many chaplains and congregants. The execution of biblical baptism, in their view, must follow very specific steps that lead to the ritual of initiation into Christ's church.

28. Mac Brunson and James Bryant. *The New Guidebook for Pastors* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2007), 132-33.

In summation of believers' baptism in Army chapels, there are Christian groups who hold the same view on the matter across denominational lines. They believe it is straight from the Lord Jesus Christ and is also known as an ordinance, a command he gave to His church. These groups also believe it requires a decision made by someone who fully understands what Christ has completed for them in His salvific work on the cross. Essentially, they must have an authentic faith conversion in Christ before participating in baptism. They also believe it is a requirement for taking the Lord's Supper for the first time and should be carried out by fully immersing the initiate in water because that is symbolic of dying to the old self and is also symbolic of man surviving the flood waters of extinction and being reborn. It further identifies the supplicant with the church body who have all taken similar steps into the waters of baptism. And finally, it is a public act of obedience and worship to God.

Just before Jesus Christ ascends into heaven in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28, verses 18-20, the Son of God says to his disciples: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."[29] The final command of Jesus before he went to sit at the right hand of the Father was to make disciples, baptize those disciples, and to teach them to follow everything he taught them during his three-year ministry. Baptism happens only after a disciple is made in Christ.

In Army chapels today, there are groups who have only been baptized as infants sitting next to groups of other people who have been baptized after a conversion experience in young adulthood or later in adulthood. In those same chapel services are chaplains who stand firmly on

29. Matthew 28:18-20.

the necessity of infant baptism while the congregation is predominately opposed to that theological viewpoint. With such a striking contrast of views and the complex theological ramifications built into that contrast, it only stands to reason and wonder if Army chapels should even attempt to broach such subjects at all. But to avoid such a topic on a regular basis, inside an Army chapel, would be detrimental to the work of the religious group of believers. It sends the message that it does not matter what one believes about baptism as long as harmony is maintained in the pews and hallways. Belief is a cornerstone of religious practice. Belief must be nurtured in how Army chapel programs are organized and developed in order to meet spiritual needs.

Convictional Truth

Also, it is appropriate at this stage of the chapter to discuss freedom of conscience under God and how this shapes how strongly individuals hold on to convictions spelled out in Scripture. This dovetails into a discussion on how compromising faith convictions is discouraged in Scriptures and also highlights how theological clarity is imperative to conformity and uniformity under Christ's authority of His Holy Word. One is reminded of the well-known historical statement made at Martin Luther's trial (Diet of Worms) during the Reformation when he said, "my conscience is held captive by the Word of God. Thus, I cannot and will not recant, for going against my conscience is neither safe nor salutary." [30] Jiminy Cricket theology, as referenced earlier, ignores biblical truth and instead is controlled by sin, error and worldly subversion. The flesh is winning against the Spirit. The goal of the theological framework

30. Brecht, Martin. *Martin Luther, Vol. 1: His Road to Reformation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1985), 460.

underpinning this thesis-project is to be biblically informed by conscience as directed by the Holy Spirit's illumination as well as ensuring it is centered around a historical-grammatical hermeneutical approach.

In any effort to assemble disparate parts together, theological clarity is imperative to achieve that end. The old axiom 'rules for thee but not for me' leads to less impactful ministries and less effectiveness in spiritual readiness. The historical-grammatical hermeneutic prescribes one set of guiding principles for all Christian people, not different ones for different people. As the Scriptures say, there is a one plumbline of truth by which all is measured and aligned. An Army chapel where some people follow biblical mandates while others barely follow any could be prone to spiritual malaise and ministry ineffectiveness. If the Army's only goal for Army chapels is moral-ethical development, even in that one issue, success cannot be guaranteed when some soldiers and families are living up to a biblical standard and others are not.

Freedom of conscience under God is not solely individualistic. It is also a community activity according to historical-grammatical hermeneutics of both the people of Israel in the Old Testament and the fledgling church in the New Testament. Individual activity with God is highly prized within the greater community of faith. The conformity aspect is also necessary to staving off heresy while encouraging growth in discipleship and moral-ethical success. God created the church community to support particular beliefs and to uphold them together. The community must agree on a set of beliefs. If the community cannot agree on community truths based on God's truth, which is ultimately the leveling force for a community, the community may become susceptible to unnatural persuasions. A community uniformity, not informed by a good hermeneutic (interpretation of scripture), is neither organized religion nor greatly effective in scope and gauge. It may be good enough for some, but is it the best that a host of well-trained

and intelligent ministers and laypersons can come up with? The fullness of God's truth should be prioritized.

During the time of the major prophet, Jeremiah, the Israelites believed God would still come through for them to conquer their enemy, the Babylonians. The situation looked bleak, especially as the prophet Jeremiah told the people of Judah that God allowed them to lose Judah and the city of Jerusalem, which also meant losing the temple and required worship on Mount Moriah. King Zedekiah and his counselors prohibited the people from surrendering to the Babylonians. God told them to go out to the Babylonians if they wanted to escape the sword. Some went out, but most stayed well within the walled cities of Jerusalem. Uniformity, without the clarity of God's prophet, led them to a pointless endeavor. They continued to resist, hoping the Egyptians would come to rescue them, which they never did.

Congregational Convictions

The point of reciting this biblical narrative is to make the connection that there will always be pressure to speak in one voice, as a congregation, on a convictional matter. There is no room for theological ambiguity. The group must understand where the voice is coming from and determine if that voice is from God. This task of discernment is best completed within organized religion which exists outside of the military. It is not completed as well by most chapel services today, but it does not have to stay that way. At a basic level, there is agreement, or otherwise people typically will end up tolerating things they do not believe or, fed up, decide to find another option. As policies fall out with religious thought and practice, it leaves large

denominational groups and their worshippers in a difficult position. Army Chaplains who represent those denominations, and have church historical backing for working in the Army as ministers, must still tread lightly on controversial topics. Thus, by avoiding these certain topics, a new form of theological thought is prevalent in Army chapels. At least, outwardly, the chapel services have taken on a federal policy tone. Others might claim that chapels have moved to the theological left of center to disadvantage conservatives and Evangelicals while becoming advantageous for theologically moderate individuals. There are chaplains who simply avoid hotly debated Holy Scriptures because those Scriptures countermand current Army regulatory guidelines, morals, and ethics.

Rite of Christian Marriage

Take, for example, the subject of Christian marriage. An Army Chaplain is authorized to preach and teach what marriage is according to the Bible, permitted by regulations. He/she is also authorized to counsel soldiers and families on their beliefs about Christian marriage. At the same time, a number of Army chaplain groups in pulpits, counseling offices, and at marriage retreats find themselves on the defensive as to the things they believe. They must be aware of their audience and ensure they frame their discussion appropriately. This extra caution may lead many to avoid directly stating Scripture's authoritative word on the matter of Christian marriage solely to dodge those who are known to antagonize ministers with Army policies.

The author of this thesis-project has always felt the freedom to discuss biblical Christian marriage within confines of the Army chapel and in counseling settings without reservation. But,

after interviewing some Army chaplains as a part of thesis-project and dissertation work, the results seem to vary. By default, Army chaplains and Army personnel must oftentimes tread lightly on topics like Christian marriage to not offend those that believe competing ideals about what Christian marriage constitutes. If they do not tread lightly, they run the risk of facing the Army's military justice system after referral from their commander for any number of offenses tied to holding a belief not in lockstep with current Army regulatory policy. The Constitution affords both theological groups the ability to believe *their* truths as a matter of conscience. But, in asking those individuals to attend the same chapel service or ministry program, this forced grouping might end up being counterproductive to the Army's mission of providing religious support to soldiers and families. This ultimately may be one of the most compelling reasons for more tailored services and programs. The risk is that it could lead to less religious activity and engagement within military installations. There is a false view that believes forced inclusivity leads to more activity, but, in reality, it merely leads to less participation. This is something current chaplain ministers are trying to avoid because they, rightly, want to engage soldiers and their families. Many people would say that organizations get more activity when the organization's values line up closely to each person's values.

Qualifications for Chapel Leaders

A church, or chapel, is a religious organization with an ultimate goal of worship and a subgoal of personal spiritual growth. There are many other goals within churches and Army chapels. But the worship goal is carried out in most instances in both settings through the work

of ordained ministers (clergy) and lay leaders (laity). The qualifications for those two groups of people are important to carry out the goal of worship. Agreement on the qualifications and requirements are vitally important. One group of believers may say the requirements for these positions are enumerated in the Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus). Others say that one must follow an Isaiah 6 model for worship, while still others might believe worship should follow the Catholic missal. The point is that some Army chapels have clear guidance on how worship should flow and other chapel services do not.

The ones who do have clearly defined religious-theological frameworks like the Catholics, Muslims, Lutherans, and Mormons who have been allowed their own spaces for worship have an implied advantage over those who do not. Other religious groups like Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Pentecostals-Charismatics, and many other Protestant Christian groups are required to worship together or require special approval from senior Army chaplains to gather in chapels when available at off peak times. This polyglot basket of Protestant beliefs is expected during war or when away from garrison but could find better solutions when stationed at home. Inevitably, the problem becomes a watering down of theological belief and practice in the long run, which is not beneficial for congregants. It has the potential to lead to an implied expectation that one must keep quiet for the greater good on matters of conscience and faith. As a long-term solution, this is not good for the conscience of Army officers and soldiers. A bifurcated mind that is not wholehearted, but conflicted, is a less useful vessel and leads to less effective soldiers. Soldiers need to know in what they believe and they need to be able to fully apply it to soldiering in order to achieve the best possible result within the profession of arms.

Ultimately, Army officers, soldiers, and their families who feel theologically clumped together with dissimilar views in how Army chapels run services will leave post chapels to discover houses of worship which better champion their theological imperatives. While normal and reasonable activity, it also creates an important distinction. If chapels are relatively unused, it may lead to the rationale they are not needed. The unsaid truth is that if one does not like what is offered, they have every right to go off post to civilian church. And while it is entirely permissible for soldiers and families to find other means of religious worship, the Army is interested in how its resources are assisting the force towards religious aims.

As an aside, those resources are made up of two important sources. Army chapels are funded with appropriated funds (AF), which are government funds for programs, coordinators, and chapel maintenance and with non-appropriated funds (NAF) which are from congregant tithes and offerings. Between these two funding sources, which also includes Army Chief of Chaplain funding, the Army expects that it should provide the best most viable religious options for those who choose to worship and exercise their faith on post. History has proven that Army leaders who have a strong sense of moral and ethical decision-making and maintain a clear understanding of their faith and its expectations have fared well in the profession. Their families have also benefited from the influence that has been exerted on their behalf. As such, Army chapels and programs are a part of fostering exceptional moral and ethical decision-making in Army leaders and their families, not to mention helping them connect with God, but only if those individuals are *present* to be influenced. If they are not present, someone else is spiritually leading and influencing them, which is not entirely a harmful prospective, but could lead to less ability for their shaping and influencing through Army leaders and Senior Army Chaplains. The Army wants to foster soldiers into becoming even better soldiers and there are ways chapel

programming can assist this development process while promoting a spiritual presence where both objectives are met.

The organized grouping of believers in the New Testament is called, in the Koine Greek, *ecclesia*. The word *ecclesia* means, "a gathering of believers."[31] Within the organizational structure of the *ecclesia* are leaders known as elders and deacons. In 1 Timothy 3, the Apostle Paul describes the qualifications for church organizational leaders and servers. Church elders (*presbyteros*) from which we get the word Presbytery or Presbyterian, are those who teach and preach the Word of God. These persons have very specific requirements that must be met in order for the gathering of believers to call them into that position.

Returning to Jeremiah's Old Testament narrative mentioned earlier, there was pressure on the Israelite people to uniformly conform. This insistence came from the city leaders and elders who were holding onto vain hope for rescue outside of what God had already decreed for them. God's voice was with Jeremiah, God's truth was spoken directly to him, and he was faithful to share his message. Individuals gather today united by common belief and practice. A group of people who are only united by style, feel, aesthetic, or unclear uniformity will suffer more in the long run, much like the Israelites did, than the group who gathers around solid belief and practice. The question is: how deep should that clarity in common belief and practice go toward creating a more productive religious dynamic? Some will say the system is doing the best that it can under the circumstances of time and space. This is generally true because there are so many rich and vibrant things Army chapels and their ministries are attempting to do to support Army communities. But the truth also remains that there are many who will agree that these

31. Frederick Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 303.

things are not as effective as they could be and there is always room for improvement if one is dedicated to discovering how this can best be done and through which paradigms needs can best be met. The reality is that the system is already asking for ways to improve as the Army force continues to evolve in terms of religious diversity, especially within groups whose predominate language is other than English, as well as those who are part of faith groups generally considered low-density.

Final Thought

To conclude this chapter, Army Senior Leaders and Chaplains have the command and control, funds, and manpower (Army Chaplains and Religious Affairs Specialists) required to increase levels of theological clarity and religious accommodation specification among chapel communities tailored to the demographic needs within the Army. It is imperative on the part of the ministry practitioners within the profession to build consensus and to grow spiritual readiness through theologically driven mandates, which exist in almost every denomination, and thankfully, in between faith groups.

The next chapter will look at literary resources from the past and present concerning religious accommodation in the Army in hopes of forming a stronger basis for future development and engagement.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Christianity…was never intended to replace or supersede the ordinary human arts and sciences: it is rather a director which will set them all to the right jobs, and a source of energy which will give them all new life, if only they will put themselves at its disposal.[1]

—C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Introduction

While today there is not a substantial amount of literature and scholarship devoted to the specialty niche of Army chapels as there is for churches, there does exist some noteworthy literature worth engaging, particularly that which helps to define the issue of creating more specific religious formation. The three areas this thesis-project will review are: (1) military regulations guiding Army chapel ministry, (2) Army chaplain doctoral and thesis-project works related to chapel ministry, and (3) historical works on Army chapel and soldier ministry. The military regulations guiding Army chapel ministry are vital to appreciate current ministry frameworks of Army chapel ministry. Also, the doctoral and thesis-project works by Army chaplains are important to examine because these have recently begun to expose the need for similar work related to this thesis-project and paper. The insights from these colleagues' work seeks to provide consensus and keep the momentum going forward. Finally, the works on Army chapels across history help to provide real world examples in hopes of bringing more clarity to the issue, which is: how do Army chaplains and DA civilians grow Army chapel ministries to soldiers and families to support the mission of preparing them spiritually for the rigors of future

1. Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 83.

combat operations? The proposal of this thesis-project is that by providing more faith-specific spiritual formation to support the accomplishment of this strategy, it will encourage soldiers and their families by meeting them closer to the central place of convictional beliefs and prepare them for those preceding eventualities.

Army Regulations on Chapel Programs

In order to flesh this out completely, one must first consult foundational Army regulations to best explain how the system operates and functions. A foundational document for the Army Chaplaincy and for Army chapel ministry programs is Army Regulation 165-1, Chaplain Activities in the United States Army. This document is regularly updated to match doctrine to common practice across all military operations. The most recent update occurred on January 23, 2015. The chapters most pertinent to this thesis-project are 1-5. Chapter 1 discusses the Chaplain Corps and the Constitution, policy development, the role of the Chief of Chaplains, and commander responsibilities at every level of leadership.[2] Chapter 2 looks at religious support in the Army with an eye for the ministry teams: chaplains and religious affairs specialists.[3] Next, Chapters 3 and 4 dig into roles, responsibilities, and the status of chaplains and religious affairs specialists. These are the people who execute, manage, and oversee religious support to Army personnel. Finally, Chapter 5 will look at garrison religious support personnel and its processes.

2. Department of the Army. *Army Regulation 165-1. Chaplain Activities* (Washington D.C., Army Publishing, 2015), i-ii.

3. Department of the Army, i-ii.

On a foundational level, Chapter 1 of AR 165-1 depicts the importance the Army places in religious support activities towards the mission of military defense. Section 1-5 b. reads:

> The Chaplain Corps itself is a product of the nation's commitment to religious freedom and its recognition that religion plays an integral role in the lives of many of its Soldiers. Chaplains have contributed to Soldiers' religious freedom, moral development, and spiritual well-being throughout the history of the Army. Army chaplains represent many religious traditions present within the pluralistic religious culture of the United States. In many nations of the world, religious beliefs influence perceptions of power, diplomacy, law, and social customs. Throughout the Army's history, chaplains have advised commanders on the impact of religion both within their own ranks and within the larger operational environment.

The keys points in this regulatory statement are religious freedom, moral development, and spiritual well-being. The Army regulation states that chaplains, in particular, play an important role within the organization. Firstly, their role helps to improve the rights of citizens to worship freely from their given religious context. Secondly, chaplains work to develop soldiers and families into better moral and ethical decision-makers. Thirdly, and equally important and probably the most noticeable by casual observers, chaplains work to develop the spiritual core of individuals in order to as the old axiom states, "bring God to soldiers and soldiers to God."

Pluralistic Environment

These efforts are carried out under what the regulation states as a pluralistic environment, which does not mean that all religions are blended into one. Rather, new chaplains and religious affairs specialists are taught at the Army chaplain schoolhouse at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, that pluralism recognizes a diversity of religious ideas and beliefs. Their job, then, is to ensure

each group is adequately cared for, in terms of providing necessary materials, space, and support they need to practice their faith. Every chaplain and religious affairs specialist must agree to carry out this mission despite sincerely held opposing religious beliefs. The Army recognizes the importance of religion in its own formation, as well as in the greater context of how the world views religion. In many organizations, religion is not seen as a valuable commodity to its cultural identity. From the Army's inception, however, religion has played a key role in helping to carry out its important mission and the Army has very well understood the scope and magnitude religious faith can motivate in its soldiers.

Commander's Religious Program

An important aspect of religious support is that Army chapels and ministries are programs of the army commander. It may seem strange that a non-religious Army commander could be responsible for religious activities, but one must remember that the Army believes in mission command. Military organizations are run successfully because of military leaders' command and control of their subordinates and equipment as well as those subordinates' willingness to be directly led under leaders' authority. AR 165-1 spells out the expectations the Army has on commanders for religious activity. It states that "commanders provide for the free exercise of religion through assigned chaplains, religious affairs specialists, and other religious support personnel (see Chapter 5)."[4] Essentially, chaplains and religious affairs specialists run the unit's religious program for the commander. Whether or not the commander is either

4. Department of the Army, 5.

religious or non-religious, it is still the commander's responsibility to ensure the unit has adequate care. The day-to-day responsibility then falls on the chaplain to carry out the mission for the commander. Generally, when chaplains advise commanders of religious support problems, commanders are quick to address the issue because they understand the importance of religion in Army units. In terms of helping to underscore the thesis-project argument, sympathetic commanders can become great enablers for new initiatives or ministry focuses. This command program has many technical aspects, and when there is divergence of opinion, support can typically be found by senior chaplain leaders at the branch. Due to this technical support, many commanders desire to be kept aware of any issues they can help solve, but they depend upon their senior and experienced chaplains to daily run religious support programs. There is an associated risk in keeping commanders in this loop because it could lead to their input causing unintended consequences. Understanding this, senior and experienced chaplains still advise commanders on religious support and keep them informed on chaplain programs because commanders can make seemingly immovable rocks move. On the flip side, they can also move rocks that do not need to be moved, which has occasionally happened within chaplain programs. Army chaplains must find the right balance of owning their responsibilities, granted to them by God and the laws of the nation through the command responsibility of the commanders, while leveraging these military leaders to gain spiritual ground in an increasingly secularized American culture. There have been numerous situations this writer has seen, throughout two decades of chaplain vocational work, where ministry initiatives have been held in the balance of success or failure explicitly by military commanders. Some ministry programs have flourished, and other programs have been utter failures when the command was not aware of, or in support of, a ministry program.

Religious Program Challenge

Early in my ministry, I planned a relationship-building event off-post at a beautiful open space in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I designed a spiritual fitness event for soldiers that would involve an adventure race to include running, swimming, kayaking, and mountain biking. It came to the week of execution, and during a staff meeting, it became clear that though the command team liked the event, they had other priorities on the schedule that would take precedence. The event was subsequently cancelled the week of the event to ensure no interference with commander priorities. The lesson learned was that even well-meaning ministry programs are always susceptible to the commander's priorities. Instead of allowing this to become problematic and disheartening for chaplain ministers, though, they should view it as an opportunity to seek commander backing to help create necessary momentum for the ministry to be successful.

Commander Support

A positive example of commander support occurred recently while I was ministering in an Army unit rotation to Poland between 2020-2021. The unit ministry team gained support from the command team to teach moral-ethical leadership training to brigade staff members at the infamous Auschwitz Concentration Camp in southern Poland. The planning was conducted in the months leading up to the event. The command ensured there were few competing events to ensure maximum participation by soldiers. Ultimately, the moral leadership training event was a success as several chaplains led hundreds of soldiers to didactically engage in moral decision-

making exercises in this somber environment where choices once mattered greatly. Command support will always be a key ingredient to religious support. Chaplains at every level must leverage commander support effectively. Command support, in the future, may mean giving commanders more access to Army chapel ministry challenges in order to have them assist in the decision-making process because their authority carries tremendous weight. As ministry practitioners look to the future, they will need to search out ways to gain commander buy-in and support.

Ministry practitioners will also need to gain greater commander participation, as seen in previous eras. Those eras are reminiscent of a story out of Vietnam told by, at the time, Chaplain (CPT) James M. Hutchens of the 173rd Airborne Brigade during the Battle of the Hump:

> One hurdle remained. Would Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel John. R. Tyler approve the plans (for chapel) and permit Sergeant Wortman to be the noncommissioned officer in charge of the building? 'It's something the battalion has needed for a long time,' he boomed. "The sooner we get started, the better!" Lieutenant Colonel Tyler's enthusiasm didn't stop there. He became one of the most loyal supporters of the chapel program I have ever served under whether we were in the field operations or at base camp, he was always in the services, unless completely hindered by his many responsibilities. Lieutenant Colonel Tyler's example and encouragement were major factors in high attendance at chapel services. Rain or shine, there he was on the front row.[5]

Some have indicated from studies there is a pressure that commanders should not be overly religious in public or allow their religious beliefs to come out in leadership. [6]

5. James Hutchens. *Beyond Combat* (Great Falls, VA: The Shepherd's Press, 1986), 71.

6. Shine, Alexander and Don Snider. *A Soldier's Morality, Religion, and our Professional Ethic: Does the Army's Culture Facilitate Integration, Character Development and Trust in the Profession?* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S Army War College Press, 2014), 1.

Religion on the Commander's Sleeve

Authors, such as Brene Brown, in lectures like "Armored Leadership vs. Daring Leadership" have recently described leaders who are authentic, and who give away pieces of themselves to others, as highly desired by staff.[7] The idea is that authenticity and acceptance of others' character, beliefs, and qualities will inspire workers to toil *for* each other while they are all following the leader's direction. In theory, this should foster an environment where the worker feels freer to be themselves, and thus, lead to greater levels of productivity and industry. Due to the popularity of this type of work within Army leadership circles today, there seems to be a renewed interest for more authenticity of character.[8] This is potentially good news for religious practitioners. Reversely, the veiled, or protected approach, by commanders in relationship to religious activity could send a wrong message to soldiers that religious activity is not an important ingredient to the whole soldier. Additionally, Fortunately, it seems that the needle is beginning to move upwards in relation to more open support for religious activity. AR 165-1 demonstrates how important commander support is to manage vibrant and religious programs through the chapel/units.

While the Army's operational tempo (OPTEMPO) has slowed down across the globe in 2021, it has led to greater scrutiny of stateside ministry initiatives. More soldiers are at home training for the nation's next major regional conflict. At the same time, the garrison chapel ministry has faced unprecedented challenges from COVID-19. The task becomes in how to implement an effective chaplain program within the constraints of the global pandemic and

7. Brene Brown. *Armored Leadership vs. Daring Leadership*. online, Apr 5, 2021, accessed on September 10, 2021, https://brenebrown.com/podcasts/brene-on-armored-versus-daring-leadership-part-1-of-2.

8. Brown, 1.

command-directed virus mitigations. Across army installations I sense talking to other chaplains and looking recent numbers chapel attendance has been down. It is plausible to expect tithes and offerings have also taken financial hits over the last year (2020-21) which if true means less available funds for chapel and soldier ministry. The one asset during these unsettled stateside times is that the unit chaplains and religious affairs specialists are more available for garrison chapel support than ever before. Understandably, this could change at any moment, as there are constant discussions about the next war, or next theater of conflict. But in the meantime, unit chaplains are more available to invest in their soldiers, on post, than during the last two decades. This fact is not lost on Army chaplain leadership as it has recently come out with an initiative to revitalize Army communities in part through religious support programming.[9] Senior leaders have sent representatives to ask questions about how to revitalize Army communities. This thesis-project seems to have come at the right time for this Army-wide initiative. AR 165-1 Chapter 2-2 e. describes how unit chaplains can help in this mission: "All chaplains and religious affairs specialists will actively support the Garrison Chaplain's religious support responsibilities unless inhibited by their organizational mission."[10] Unit chaplains are given guidance to support garrison chapel programming beyond their respective unit ministry. The biggest deterrent to effective support by unit chaplains is the demands of unit ministry, which is typically a seven day per week vocation. Behind this regulatory requirement is the fact that, historically, garrison ministry has helped to improve installation/unit outcomes. The unit versus garrison debate is well-known, but harder to support when units are more stable. The unit is more a part of the

9. Department of the Army. *Community Revitalization Presentation*. Power-point (Washington D.C.: Army Chief of Chaplains Office, 2020).

10. Department of the Army. *Army Regulation 165-1. Chaplain Activities* (Washington D.C.: Army Publishing, 2015), 6.

installation and what happens in the unit affects the installation. A key ingredient to implementing new paradigms and breaking ground within Army chapels and programs is found in unit chaplains and religious affairs specialists. New chaplains are told to visit with, or communicate with, the Garrison Chaplain's office upon arriving to a new duty station. This visit is a time to discuss a place to serve where a chaplain is gifted, or feels called, to be. Army Regulation 165-1, 2-2, e. gives the garrison the authority to utilize unit chaplains when they are not training or deployed to theatres of war. Again, if Army chapels are going to make up ground after the COVID-19 down-turn, Garrison Chaplain must think creatively about how they can utilize unit chaplains to fulfill the mission.

Chapter 3, section 1, d., continues this discussion of the chaplain's role outside of the unit. It states:

> Chaplains have roles and responsibilities beyond their unit of assignment. Chaplains are responsible for unit, area, and distinctive religious group religious support. Operational orders will document recurring coverage responsibilities of chaplain duties beyond their assigned unit. Priority of support is normally to the unit, then the area, and then distinctive religious groups:[11]

The Army specifically states, on a chaplain's military orders, that they will support area ministry coverage. This means they will support the installation from their denominational background in the area where the Garrison Chaplain needs their support. Chapter 3 also describes the priority of the different ministry hats a chaplain will wear while serving at an installation. The chaplain must first support unit ministry, then the garrison ministry, and finally, his or her own denominational ministry. It is no secret that unit ministry takes up most of a young chaplain's time as a minister. The area ministry may require much more if the chaplain has been selected to

11. Department of the Army. *Army Regulation 165-1. Chaplain Activities* (Washington D.C.: Army Publishing, 2015), 7.

lead as a chapel pastor or chapel program lead. Denominational support is greater for certain religious groups of chaplains and less for others. Since a large swath of chaplains fall under the larger umbrella of Protestantism, they have not had the space within the regulation for denominational responsibilities on installations. Most Protestant chaplains participate in an interdenominational ministry due to the nature of how garrison chapel programs are set up. Army regulations indicate which ministry hat has priority over the other ministries. Unit ministry is securely the highest priority. Understanding this reality will help future practitioners to know what forces they are up against when looking to improve religious activity for specific faith groups like denominational groups. According to the regulation, denominational group desires fall under a third priority, unless the denominational group has an approved garrison ministry program. Only then would that ministry fall under the second priority of area ministry coverage.

The final chapter worth examining is Chapter 5, Religious Support Personnel. This chapter looks at some of the inner workings of providing manpower to garrison religious programs to ensure they are successful. This chapter looks at religious education, contracting, distinctive religious group coordinators, volunteers, and childcare.[12] All of these focus areas are vitally important to the success of Army chapels. With unit ministry prioritized within the Army as the most significant, it is not surprising that area ministry leans heavily on religious support personnel, other than chaplains, to make ministry happen.

12. Department of the Army, 10-12.

Religious Education

A great ministry multiplier that Army religious support has over other organizations is that it will fund religious education experts and religious education programs. AR 165-1, 5-2 a. describes the importance of religious education and those directors who run those programs:

> Directors of Religious Education (DRE) serve as the Garrison Chaplain's key resource persons in the area of religious education and religious formation. DREs analyze, develop, manage, present, and evaluate religious education programs and religious formation processes that facilitate the religious development of soldiers and family members. Religious education is a formative process that plays an integral part in stabilizing character, heart, and soul during the rigors of deployment, combat, reintegration, and other life cycle challenges associated with military service.[13]

This is relevant in the discussion of new paradigms in Army chapels and new faith-specific spiritual formation curriculums because these individuals are the gatekeepers, according to the Army. The Army chaplain is the religious education practitioner in many cases, but the director of religious education is the planner and key resource for religious education and spiritual formation. They are the ones who hold access to appropriated funds to facilitate spiritual formation at the installations where their positions exist. Unit chaplains historically have required some generalized support from DREs and the garrison chapel chaplain's tithes and offerings fund (CTOF) to conduct consistent spiritual formation. Currently, unit chaplains must request additional funds outside of their unit through DREs or through chapel pastors and their congregations. Otherwise, they will have to fund those programs themselves or with unit support if they can get it. Sometimes unit support is hampered by bureaucracy or priority of felt needs. The DRE's role is to remain constant when military operations and unit ministry priorities lead to de-prioritization of religious education and formation.

13. Department of the Army, 11.

Military Contracting for Religious Clergy

The contracting of religious clergy to meet needs the Army cannot meet is another aspect of Chapter 5 and worth visiting. The regulation states that "contracting for religious services is authorized when the Army is unable to meet religious support requirements in the garrison religious support program."[14] I have personally witnessed the use of civilian clergy contracting for Catholic ministry support, chapel pianists, youth workers, as well as worship leaders. These religious support personnel are great assets for Army chapels that should be continued, increased, and further expanded to Protestant and low-density, high demand religious support personnel. Furthermore, I have not witnessed the contracting system used to provide any Protestant civilian clergy of any kind, although this can happen infrequently. Due to the regulation provided above which prohibits military contracting for personnel who the Army believes already has proper religious coverage currently, more faith specific civilian support has not been made available. However, this could change in the future if there is a move towards more specification within worship and religious education requirements either led by the Army Chaplain Corps or by soldier and family demands. AR 165-1 states these contracts must be renewed every year and must detail the scope of work the civilian clergy will conduct. Many retired chaplains and civilian clergy have been great resources to build up religious support in military communities or to help support chapel pastors and chapel programs in the past, but their help is more sporadic now.

Distinct Religious Group Leaders (DRGLs)

14. Department of the Army, 12.

Similarly, distinct religious group leaders (DRGLs) are an interesting religious support group to consider. These individuals are those who volunteer but do not function as military chaplains and do not receive any compensation or reimbursement. They are not allowed to perform collective Protestant Services.[15] This prohibition prevents Protestant volunteers from leading services that compete with current chapel services, but the focus seems to be only on collective Protestant chapel services. This regulation demonstrates why the term Protestant leaves little opportunity for specific denominational groups under the current umbrella. DRGLs oftentimes prefer to act as volunteers outside of the recognized status of the regulation. In addition, it seems likely there are less DRGLs due to the lengthy and administrative process of approval. The Protestant prohibition within the regulation has probably led to less of these volunteers who would very well be willing to help the chapel programs otherwise.

Chapel Auxiliary and Volunteers

Army chapels and their programs are more successful today due to the involvement of chapel auxiliary ministries and volunteers. These religious support personnel are authorized in AR 165-1, 5-6, d-e. The regulation states:

> Voluntary services may be accepted from civilian personnel from both the military and civilian communities and from military personnel and their families. They will perform their service under the direction of the Garrison Chaplain and the supervision of designated chaplains or DRE staff members. Chapel volunteers will be registered by the Chapel Volunteer Coordinator and entered into the Chapel Volunteer Management System where appropriate.

15. Department of the Army, 12.

Under this regulation, Army chapels benefit from the robust auxiliary ministries that are supported under the direction of the Garrison Chaplain. Generally, these auxiliary chapel programs exist at every military installation where there is proper coordination and funding available through the Garrison Chaplain's Office. Smaller installations sometimes do not have the personnel or funding sources to carry out auxiliary programs but do benefit from these services when implemented on a small scale. In terms of supporting greater religious specification and religious activity, chapel auxiliaries are great transitory ministries for families who move often. They are also great at disseminating information about other ministries and linking people together. Generally, they are focused on religious education and fellowship by population groups. Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC), one of these groups, has a solid track record for spiritually developing women, but also for providing chapel volunteers for services. Club Beyond is another auxiliary that has a proven track record in supporting youth on military installations. These youth, and their leaders, are generally active in supporting worship, sound engineering, and other chapel service coordination. As one looks to blaze new pathways, there are some chapel auxiliary and volunteer groups who will inevitably play a role in supporting those efforts. Finding ways to partner with chapel auxiliaries and volunteers more effectively will potentially open new ground for chapel programming.

Watch care & Childcare

The final area within AR 165-1 worth reviewing is the section discussing watch care and childcare, which is highlighted in Chapter 5, Section 7. Paragraph E states that "the chaplain

responsible for the religious programs will provide space for child care in selected chapels and/or religious education facilities in compliance with fire, cleanliness, hygiene, and safety standards.[16] This directive focuses on ensuring certain Army chapels are adequate for watch care and childcare services. Watch care is simply childcare contracted directly through the Army chapel. Childcare is a service of childcare provided through the Child & Youth Services (CYS) program, which is a sub service of the Child Development Centers (CDC). One of the greatest deterrents to increasing religious activity in Army chapels is the lack and consistency of watch care and childcare services. Adequate facilities and volunteers are always a consideration for childcare needs. Due to Army chapels adopting garrison standards for childcare, this has led to longer volunteer wait times and ultimately less religious support personnel to staff these needs. In an abundance of caution for very good reasons, chapel services require all personnel working with children to go through background checks and complete a volunteer packet. While this protects children, chapels, and the garrison, it is more bureaucratic in nature, which means outcomes take longer. With constantly rotating personnel, time is not something that Army chapels have in abundance. The availability, or lack, of childcare can either make or break a chapel ministry program. It is reasonable to presume where childcare services are not present, attendance numbers can be expected to go down. I personally have seen a numerous chapels where childcare programs are not present, Army families with small kids are less likely to attend. They are looking for chapel programs for their kids. My experience is where childcare and watch care services exist, program numbers are up. When considering ways to grow and improve religious engagement through spiritual formation, a chaplain practitioner must plan and consider how to ensure the implementation of childcare services for soldiers and families. The average age of an

16. Department of the Army, 14.

Army soldier is 24 years old. Oftentimes, these soldiers have already started families and are disinclined to find their own accommodation if childcare is not readily available. When an Army chapel does not have childcare services available, it can be a sign of a system breakdown in not meeting its greatest potential.

Conclusion on Army Regulation 165-1, Chaplain Activities

While Army Regulation 165-1 is restrictive in terms of chaplain ministry, it is also prescriptive in its efforts to enhance chaplain ministry. This regulation helps chaplain practitioners navigate Army chaplain ministry. It also assists chaplains in avoiding pitfalls associated with the restrictive regulations. I have personally experienced both the benefits of its prescriptive regulations and the limitations of restrictive regulations. Avoiding unnecessary conflicts and ministry deflaters is essential to growing a vibrant and thriving chaplain ministry within the Army chapel program. Too many Army chaplains face obstacles or unintended issues, and rather than persevere, decide to retreat in safety. Ultimately, chaplain practitioners who do not know the answer to a question about chaplain ministry should ask a seasoned chaplain or the Garrison Chaplain. Finding chaplain leaders who are ministry-enabling and sympathetic to new paradigms is invaluable. It will generally bolster a young chaplain's heart-felt ministry pursuits. 165-1 points chaplain practitioners in the right direction in his or her efforts to enhance religious activity through more specific worship and spiritual formation. Many current and former chaplains support this truth in their personal journeys and academic pursuits. As a part of a

profession that is always learning, Army chaplains have, through their academic work, sought to break new ground on related topics that will be beneficial to this discussion.

Master's Thesis on Army Chapels

Currently leading the Army Chaplain Corps' work on community revitalization in 2021 is a chaplain who wrote extensively on the Army chapel system. Chaplain (COL) Steve Peck, in his master's thesis, written in 2008 entitled, *"*Post Modern Chapel Services for Generation X and Millennial Generation Soldiers," intently looks at "the spiritual needs of the majority of soldiers by age demographic."[17] He examines several Protestant chapels closely to determine why those models are not attracting the next two generations of soldiers. This is an important work because it is written by a chaplain practitioner who is looking for better ministry solutions through Army chapel programs. He is also, currently, the individual tasked with revitalizing chapel communities after two decades of global conflict and COVID-19. The prioritization of unit focused ministry, in the eyes of the senior leadership within the Army Chaplain Corps in the recent past, has led to the need for redoubled efforts within the garrison ministry. Chaplain Peck's work is also important due to the fact that it is written by a chaplain focused on chaplain to soldier spiritual care rather than upon chapel program development within the context of worship or spiritual formation. This is further proof that the attention in chaplain ministry has been less linked to religious organization and doctrine. Chaplain Peck desires for Army chapels to make a difference on Army installations among soldiers and their families. His concern for the

17. John Steven Peck. A Master's Thesis, "Post Modern Chapel Services for Gen X & Millennial Generation Soldiers" (Kansas State University, KS, 2008), ii.

Army Chaplain Corps is that it will render itself irrelevant or that it will divert its attention towards areas of ministry and work for which chaplains are not best suited. He describes the plausibility of not being relevant as

> the author's concern… that bean counters and decision makers will look at the Chaplain Corps in 10 to 20 years from now, and say, "what is it you chaplains do again?" If the answer is a list of important additional relevant duties chaplains will have missed their historical, legal, and spiritual calling and responsibility. Chaplains will also be in direct competition with secular entities such as social workers, psychologists, anthropologists, and diplomats, who have as much and often more training within their specialty than chaplains do.[18]

Chaplain Peck wrote these words over a decade ago and his clairvoyance is, in fact, more a reality today than in 2008 when he penned these words. I remember attending the Saddleback Community Church Chaplain Conference in November of 2004, which had the theme of the Purpose-Driven Chaplain. Chaplain Peck writes about it in his thesis. This conference was developed by the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (MG) David Hicks, a Presbyterian, who at the time, believed chaplains needed more pastoral ministry training, not less. Currently, commanders are desiring professional counselors and behavior health specialist chaplains as much as they want professional religious clergy. As Chaplain Peck describes, Army chaplains also have historical, legal, and administrative responsibilities.[19] Those responsibilities are religious in nature. They are also informed by denominational expectations. Recently, chaplains were required to assess the sincerity of soldiers' request for religious accommodation against the

18. Department of the Army. *Army Regulation 165-1. Chaplain Activities* (Washington D.C.: Army Publishing, 2015), 23.

19. Department of the Army.

COVID-19 vaccine. [20] This happened in the fall of 2021. To date, none of the thousands of requests have been approved by the military as a religious accommodation. [21]

In relationship to this thesis-project, how important would it be for soldiers and chaplains to understand theologically why they are requesting an exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine or, conversely, why they believe taking it is acceptable? Spiritual readiness supports the quick decisions that soldiers must make when presented with a command from leaders. Soldiers and chaplains must obey commands but should do so from an informed religious position so they will have confidence in the decision made. Regardless of the vaccine decision, having chaplains who can theologically describe why a soldier wants an exemption in a memorandum is prized by commanders. Having a soldier better informed about the reasons why they desire an exemption is equally valuable for the commander. Either way, developing more informed theological and convictional perspectives, while in uniform, is necessary as more and more crisis of beliefs present themselves to Army personnel.

When soldiers ask a chaplain their view of a theological issue, it is important the chaplain be ready to give an honest answer. In this scenario, the organization benefits from having spent more focus on the development of theological and convictional understandings. Instead of higher authorities being surprised by chaplain memorandums, they are prepared for the theological sincerity and its arguments those chaplains describe related to the soldier requesting religious accommodation. If the Army cares about what soldiers believe and that those are, in truth, sincerely held beliefs, then it also demonstrates care about soldiers' spiritual formation. The

20. Lolita Baldour. "Troops Find Religious Exemptions for Vaccines Unattainable," Boston, MA: Boston News 25 Online, Dec 19, 2021, assessed on January 12, 2022, https://boston25news.com /news/health/troops-find/DFBVLIH5Q4S5CCQ7YLC7WL4FYQ/.

21. Baldour, 1.

recent challenge all chaplains faced on these religious accommodation requests for COVID-19 vaccines is proof that it is time to develop at a deeper spiritual level.

Chaplain Peck's work gets at the heart of the discussion. Admittingly, his main focus is on chapel worship services, but his ultimate goal seems to be on how to reach more soldiers and families by creating a better tailored ministry product. I am more focused on spiritual formation first, and the worship service, second. Army chapels have done a great job with worship services in the past two decades. In Chapter 5, I discuss outcomes and make recommendations for chapel services. However, like Chaplain Peck, I do believe the discussion on chapel worship services is closely linked to a chapel's spiritual formation agenda. Historically, a church's worship service was preceded by a type of religious education, or religious education happened midweek. Either way, the worship and religious education were coordinated to work together for the greater spiritual good of the congregation. Chaplain Hutchens describes this from his time in Vietnam:

> Another chaplain and I alternated a troop service on Sundays at ten o'clock in another area and I led a nightly Bible study for officers and a daily morning bible study for troops. The morning bible study was somewhat of a convert's class supplied by the other chaplains' evangelistic meetings. Nearly thirty men professed Christ as Savior during the trip; two of these…I baptized later in Vietnam.[22]

Chaplains like these in Vietnam in the 1960s were linking weekly religious education to worship services and evangelistic gatherings. This spiritual process led to great spiritual outcomes for those units in terms of their relationship with God. The second order effect was that they were more prepared for what happened in that coming week.

The coordination of worship and spiritual formation led to stronger outcomes than the bifurcation of the two. In this vein, Chaplain Peck's work on chapel services parallels my

22. James Hutchens. *Beyond Combat* (Great Falls, Virginia: The Shepherd's Press. 1986), 23.

engagement with spiritual formation in that it informs worship. In turn, worship informs spiritual formation. Together these aspects of Christian faith development build a better product for God. Parted, they lead to less theological consensus and may lead to more confusion in soldiers who are less informed in their faith. Generalized Protestant services may not assist in informing faith as much as leaders believe them to do.

In his master's work, Chaplain Peck discusses three church models used in the last fifty years. Those models are the traditional, pragmatic, and emergent.[23] The traditional model involves a style of worship that harkens back to old America. It values short and pithy worship. There are pews in rows. Hymns are sung. People dress up in their Sunday best. They attended intentional religious education on things like missions, evangelism, biblical studies, and discipleship. The pragmatic church is characterized as closely associated with churches like Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago and Rick Warren's Saddleback Community Church. These churches, he says, eliminated things within traditional church models that did not connect. They were also more friendly and inviting to the unchurched population[24] which led to an explosion of people, the modern-day mega church model. In most instances, mega churches held worship attendance every week of upwards of 2,500-25,000 congregants. While theological education or spiritual formation did not completely disappear at the pragmatic church, the sheer numbers of congregants led to a shift in ministry priorities. The worship service became the central teaching instrument for this model. Small groups and cell groups were starting to make up for less formalized in-house religious education. Sunday School was, in many cases,

23. John Steven Peck. *A Master's Thesis, "Post Modern Chapel Services for Gen X & Millennial Generation Soldiers"* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College Publishing, 2008), 16-17.

24. Peck, 16-17.

substituted for more loosely based, organic, Bible-study groups. The church growth movement, in which these churches fell under, definitely made an impact in the church world. Military chapel services were highly influenced by this civilian church movement in the 1990s and early 2000s. It led to chapels starting contemporary services which would later be called Chapel Next services. Personally, I have been a part of a several Chapel Next style chapels since 2004. Each of these fit well with Chaplain Peck's description of the pragmatic church model. Ultimately, though, I only remember two of five chapel services where they offered chapel specific spiritual formation from within the service. Several of the other services relied on chapel auxiliary programs and DRE planned religious education to cover spiritual formation. The chapel services offered up Garrison Chaplain programs to anyone living or working on the installation, regardless of connection to the chapel service. While these are good programs, they tend to be disconnected from chapel congregations, who, it could be argued, are themselves interested in spiritual formation offerings.

Pragmatic Church Model

Interestingly, Pastor Bill Hybels, later in an article,[25] shares his regrets with how he led Willow Creek Community Church to prioritize worship and attendance over spiritual formation, also known as discipleship. The pragmatic model, as Chaplain Peck describes, was a

25. Bob Burney. *First Person: A Shocking Confession from Willow Creek Community Church leaders*. Online. Baptist Press, Nashville, Nov. 6, 2007, assessed on January 12, 2022, https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/first-person-a-shocking-confession-from-willow-creek-community-church-leaders/.

"phenomenon"[26] that, to the bystander, seemed very effective. Ultimately, Pastor Hybels believed the pragmatic model took the focus away from the serious and devout followers of Christ and their careful development. It wrongly put emphasis on the crowd. He saw, over the years, that this did not measure up to God's standards of fully realized faith. Though Hybels worked with individuals preparing worship services and coordinating for thousands each week, some of these fell out of faith completely. They did not have the real fruit of the Spirit of Holy God controlling their lives, and so, their lives did not reflect the spiritual disciplines of deep abiding faith. It did not make sense to him until he realized these individuals were not as discipled as he thought they were. They did not have the perseverance well-informed faith followers tended to exude; they too easily fell by the wayside. Equally disappointing from Willow Creek's pragmatic church model is the ignominious exit Hybels himself faced as senior pastor due to allegations of improper relations. [27]

The legacy of the pragmatic church continues to be written within those churches and pastors who utilized this model. As Chaplain Peck details, Army Protestant chapels also moved with the pragmatic model which helps in understanding why things are situated as they are in chapels today. Chaplain Peck admits the seeker church movement had its detractors and skeptics.[28] The pragmatic model was good at engaging with seekers, outsiders, non-churched, down-and-outs, and society at large. There were, though, detractors to the pragmatic model of church. Chaplain Peck mentions two pastors-theologians who denounced this moment quickly –

26. John Steven Peck. *A Master's Thesis, "Post Modern Chapel Services for Generation X and Millennial Soldiers,"* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army Command and General Staff College, 2008), 16.

27. Bob Burney, 1.

28. Peck, 18.

R.C. Sproul and John MacArthur.[29] Sproul and MacArthur have remained more consistent than almost any other pastors who were part of the pragmatic movement. In the parallel world of the Army chapel program, strides have been made to mirror some of the successful methodology civilian churches have used. The biggest concern for many chaplains and pastors is spiritual depth. Does this methodology lead to the most spiritually informed congregants? Worship services have served as an introduction to organized faith for a few decades with great success. Chaplain Peck discusses one church model that has arisen in the last half century worth exploring – the emergent/emerging church.

Emerging/Emergent Church Model

In 2008, as Chaplain Peck was writing his thesis, the emerging/emergent church model was being popularized. This burgeoning ministry model saw the pragmatic church model as too mainstream for post-moderns because they saw how people were flowing, just as quickly, out of the church in a post-Christian age.[30] The old techniques for reaching people were not working. Pastors like Mark Driscoll and Brian McLaren believed they needed to step out of the mainstream. Chaplain Peck posits a quote from John MacArthur where the pastor discusses how he felt the emergent church did not believe in doctrine and was not dogmatic enough about any theology or scriptural interpretations.[31] He also defined how emergent churches, in those years,

29. Peck, 18.

30. Peck, 18.

31. Peck, 22.

defined themselves as missional, mosaic, and monastic.[32] He described this to paraphrase as a group of people who felt led to live in the community, seeking to be multi-cultural and pursuing spirituality, community, and the common good. Instead of the Bible as their guide, they wanted to use culture as a guide to how and why to develop spiritual pursuits. It was basically using Jesus' good example and deeds without the Word of God, a most convoluted and wildly insufficient approach to Christianity. The good order and discipline that churches were to follow, according to Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians, was not followed closely in this model. Things like tradition, form, and order became deterrents to potential church members. Furthermore, Chaplain Peck lists some other defining characteristics of this modality mentioned by Ed Stetzer, church planting expert. This model believed in community outreach. They were interested in the relational aspect of the church. They sought authenticity among its members. They wanted to see transformation and were interested in ancient and mystical things.[33] Zooming out to capture the big picture of this discussion of the emerging/emergent church model, one can see there was a big leap made by church practitioners to reach post-modern thinkers.

These models, mentioned by Chaplain Peck, each represent methods practitioners used to reach people more effectively. Their problem emerged as a solid lack of interest in church or God or even in the Bible itself. Their solutions became ways to engage people through as many means as they could. Spiritual formation and discipleship remained in ineffectual disarray through these haphazard methods and led to difficulties in knowing what people ought to be taught, with true intentionality and deliberation, when, in the past, anything that brought people together might be deemed good enough. Because of this, doctrinal teaching must be incorporated

32. Peck, 82.

33. Peck, 88-92.

back into chapel programs, through chapel services, as people thirst for deeply convictional truths. A twelve-week spiritual formation program that will be discussed in chapter four of project design will demonstrate that people *will* support doctrinal teaching. In a cultural setting where the winds change constantly, people are looking for spiritual anchors built on solid doctrine.

Final Thoughts on Church Models

To close out Chaplain Peck's detailed work on Protestant Army chapels, his recommendation to future practitioners is for them to pursue the emerging church model. He claims that the Army is not currently using that model.[34] I do know of several chaplains who are associated with groups like Acts 29 Network who are trying to pursue chapel models that reach people through some of the principles of the emerging/emergent church model. But, the overall average, as Chaplain Peck declares, is one where Army chapels either lean towards more traditional or pragmatic/seeker driven services.[35] In 2021, this unfortunate reality must be part of the reason the Army Chaplain Corps has asked Chaplain Peck to spearhead Army community revitalization within the Army chapel system. It makes sense that a renewed emphasis will be placed on chapel models and chapel programming. If this happens, it could lead to a more standardized system to which congregants can be committed. While I agree with Chaplain Peck's recommendations and ascertains from 2008, there is one area on which to focus more attention.

34. Peck, 111.

35. Peck.

In tailoring chapel services to reflect doctrinal umbrella groups or affinity groups and using companion spiritual formation in preaching and teaching as the catalyst, I believe Army chapel programs can create greater consistency, confidence, and spiritual maturity in its soldiers. Where Chaplain Peck focuses on worship services, senior leaders should take a step further into doctrinal affinity. Elements of style and art have too long defined church models. It is time to put the emphasis in chapels on building convictional beliefs that can lead to extraordinary Christian faith practice in the midst of mission and crisis readiness. The climate Protestant Christians find themselves in requires their quick-twitch spiritual muscles to navigate the moral and ethical dilemmas facing them. Creating these chapel waystations will certainly lead to spiritual growth and a greater understanding of the Army chapel methodology so that they, hopefully, gain command support and lead to more individuals trusting in the methodology chapels are utilizing to develop the souls of the force.

Evangelical Church Alliance Tenets of Faith

The last literary work to examine is the Evangelical Church Alliance's International tenets of faith statement from July 15, 2020.[36] While I am not endorsed by this group, they have merit in their ability to bring various religious groups together. Plainly, they could become a theological/convictional umbrella group within Army chapel programs. As Army chapels begin to form statements of faith to better define what the chapel service and programs represent,

36. The Evangelical Church Alliance International. *Tenets of Faith.* online, Bradley, IL: ECA Publishing, July 15, 2020, assessed on DEC 15, 2021, https://ecainternational.org//images/uploads/ECA_Standards/Tenets_of_Faith_15_July_2020.pdf.

having umbrella, or tent, groups of agreement is paramount to this effort. Southern Baptists, conservative Presbyterians, conservative non-denominational, and other amenable groups could use this statement. As a Southern Baptist, I find nothing within the ECA tenets of faith with which I particularly disagree. The first sentence of the statement declares that the organization was formed by "godly men who were moved to band together for the purpose of promoting evangelical Christianity throughout the world."[37] While evangelical Christianity is hotly debated within Christian circles due to changing views/beliefs on social and moral issues, the ECA's statement is clear enough to assist the thesis-project discussion. In a society where moral and social beliefs are constantly being influenced by culture, the ECA's second sentence should reassure convictional religious groups because it states that "all individuals, churches and Christian organizations applying for membership shall subscribe to the following Tenets of Faith, which can never be repealed, changed, varied, altered, amended, or modified.[38] Ultimately, the framers of this statement of belief inform the reader that this document is not up for interpretation or future changes. It will not change with the changing of the cultural winds; it is cemented into its cornerstone and that is heartening. In today's religious environment, there is so much pressure to alter, or amend, certain moral viewpoints related to Scripture to accommodate individual's lifestyles without judgment. Certain social/moral issues have become acceptable to some Christian groups while remaining unacceptable to others. Even the Army culture has changed on various issues, but devout religious groups have not always followed because they wish to maintain their religious belief on a particular moral issue without compromise or impediment. The ECA statement works well for those religious groups who take certain

37. Evangelical Christian Alliance, 1.

38. Evangelical Christian Alliance, 1.

theological beliefs as unchangeable, amenable, revocable, or alterable. This is an important distinction to make in accepting that not all Christian groups represented in the Army, or outside of the Army, maintain a similar viewpoint. As mentioned in previous chapters, opposing camps are, oftentimes, lumped together within Army chapel systems in an unnatural way which leads to less religious engagement because inevitably, people decide to find more agreeable worship options when faced with these great divides. The ECA belief that the tenets of faith cannot be altered because the truths represented are eternal and unchangeable is an important rallying point for Protestant, conservative, evangelical, and biblical adherents.

Evangelical Belief in Inerrancy

Additionally, the ECA's statement underscores belief in the Bible's inerrancy, which is a fundamental tenet of numerous evangelical denominations and groups. It states that "we believe that both Old and New Testaments constitute the divinely inspired word of God, inerrant in the originals.[39] This statement describes how both testaments of the Bible come directly from God and are without any errors in the original manuscripts. This is an important theological point, especially against the backdrop of the twentieth century's historical theology issue of classical liberalism which touts a contrary creed. While some religious groups have moved away from the belief that the Bible is without error and completely trustworthy, other groups have maintained that belief. The belief the Bible has errors, which allows for questioning its authority and authenticity while also permitting the Bible to be adjustable to progressive theological ideas, has

39. Evangelical Christian Alliance, 1.

led to great schisms. Army chapels have attempted to navigate these issues wisely by looking for consensus and by not spending time addressing these issues especially when they countermand Army policy. It has led to a perceived acceptance of progressive ideologies without a full sanctioning. The truth may be that more people disagree with hot topic issues, but again, therein lies the conundrum of retaining personal religious liberty while balancing Army prerogative. Creating spaces for theological honesty, however, will help preserve divergent groups' ability to engage openly in the whole counsel of Scripture as they see it. When an Army chapel has a theological statement which includes a belief in the inerrancy of Scripture, it communicates to two groups, effectively and cordially, without unnecessary conflict. These visible theological markers can steer soldiers and families smoothly into umbrella groups where their theological viewpoints are best represented. Using aesthetics to steer people into ministry programs is not adequate enough in today's climate. The focus needs to be clear what a group believes and for what it stands.

Sola Gratia- Grace Alone

Another theological belief of the ECA to consider is the belief that man is incapable of doing anything to save themselves. This is summed up in the ECA's tenets this way: "we believe that man is totally depraved in that of himself he is utterly unable to remedy his lost condition."[40] This statement has ramifications today. If humanity cannot save itself, then all human effort towards saving itself is pointless. This theological distinction is under question today with groups

40. Evangelical Christian Alliance, 1.

who believe God does not make people choose, but instead, allows them to live without penalty for their sin, and at the very last moment, yanks them to heaven out of His great love. This viewpoint is essentially universalism. This type of universalism believes that God will save everyone in the end. Most conservative evangelicals hold that God is the only one who can redeem human beings through His atoning work on the cross and that man cannot redeem, or do anything on his own, to gain God's justification. He/she must only believe, through faith, in what Christ did for him/her through the salvific work of the cross. Essentially, the works of man cannot save human beings. Companion to this view, is that for every belief in Christ's atoning sacrifice, there is someone who does not believe it. This unbelief in human depravity, to the conservative evangelical, means there will be future judgment. A decision not to believe is also a decision to accept God's damnation as punishment for sin. To the described universalist, it matters not, for God will save everyone. To the conservative evangelical, God will judge those who have not accepted His Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord. This theological discrepancy can be adjudicated by developing a statement of faith which discusses how and by what route a person receives God's redemption, justification, and sanctification. The ECA tenet statement does well to make the points at a macro-level that have ramifications for micro-level morality without being explicit. A statement like this can say everything to a newly arrived soldier and family without delving too deeply into every moral circumstance they might encounter.

Evangelical Unity on Baptism

In terms of sacraments, or ordinances, depending on church background, the ECA's statement is clear and helpful. It declares poignantly that "we believe in the water baptism of believers, symbolizing the believer's union in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We believe in the observance of the Lord's Supper commemorating the sacrifice of our Savior for all mankind."[41] Southern Baptists believe these two religious acts are ordinances, which means they are things Jesus specifically commanded His disciples to carry out as the body of Christ. Other groups may call them sacraments but still view them as commands from Christ. No matter what baptism and the Lord's Supper are called, it is seminally important for there to be agreement on what each is and what the purpose is. The ECA statement defines it as the thesis-project writer would, that baptism is a "water baptism of believers"[42] and that the Lord's Supper is an "observance"[43] that "commemorates the sacrifice of our Savior."[44] I have witnessed, throughout my career, instances when other types of baptism were conducted in chapel services where the predominant viewpoint disagreed. Oftentimes, the officiating chaplain happened to be from a less represented group. The chaplain was approached to conduct infant baptism and felt that chapel service was the appropriate place to conduct the baptism, but to many, it was not the appropriate venue. Additionally, there have been chapel services where an officiating chaplain represented a transubstantiation viewpoint of Lord's Supper/Communion while the preponderance of congregants were symbolic observance adherents. In characteristic Army

41. Evangelical Christian Alliance, 1.

42. Evangelical Christian Alliance.

43. Evangelical Christian Alliance.

44. Evangelical Christian Alliance.

fashion, people overlooked it in order to keep the peace and unity so prized in the military community. The ECA statement is a great example of an inter-denominational shared belief about two important rites where the Army chapel programs could create space for like faith and beliefs while also signaling to those who are looking for something else that other options exist.

Evangelical Code of Conduct

Finally, the ECA tenet faith statement, without being too harsh in one of its last declarations, discusses how a Christian should live and behave without being explicit. The statement claims that "we believe the life of the believer is to be separated from the world by consistent conduct before God and man, and is to be in the world as a life-giving light."[45] Many denominational groups craft large morality statements on most of the current issues people are facing. This statement says enough to clarify that Christians are expected to be different and separated. If the world is doing one thing, a believer is supposed to be living a set apart life for God. What that looks like is defined in the Bible and does not change with time. This statement communicates that this group is committed to a plumbline truth not easily swayed by culture and outside influences.

45. Evangelical Christian Alliance, 1.

Final Thoughts on ECA Tenets of Faith

In summation, the Evangelical Church Alliance International tenets of faith statement offers a great literary example of casting a wide net yet does not compromise in convictional claims. If Army chapel organizers are looking for references for how to create spaces for like beliefs, they should look to the ECA statement for conservative, evangelical, Protestants. Earlier in this thesis-project (Chapter 2) I discussed some important theological tenets of Southern Baptists. While Southern Baptists have their own endorsing agency and statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, the presence of groups like the ECA demonstrate how these spaces could be created in Army chapels for like-minded soldiers and their families built around solidifying doctrines. Equally, Army planners could use progressive, universalistic, and post-modern theological elements to create other spaces for those individuals who choose to adhere to those types of doctrines. While I do not ascribe to those positions, in terms of fairness and good order and discipline, creating these spaces would allow for more specificity and commitment from on post soldiers and families as well as more activity for Army personnel.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT DESIGN (RESEARCH METHODS)

The answer to a man's response to the gospel, to his behavior towards others and his degree of personal discipline is not in his environment or circumstance. The answer is deep within the man himself. [1]

—Chaplain (COL) Ret. James Hutchens, *Beyond Combat*

Introduction

The current project with Gordon-Conwell is linked to my previous work at West Point and was restarted and completed later while I was the chapel pastor for the Army at Moffett Field Chapel in Mountain View, California. The project I ran at Moffett Field Chapel from August of 2019 to July 2020 had its genesis at West Point in 2015, which is described in more detail in Appendix F.

Project Design

My plan for the project's design was to use a three-pronged approach focusing on the project, the research of other success stories and the analysis of soldier and congregant surveys (Appendix D). Toward those endeavors, it was important to answer questions fellow practitioners might have related to project design including: how did I make this happen, what were the steps, and what resources were needed? Interestingly, comparing the original thesis-

[1] 1. Hutchens, James. Beyond Combat (Great Falls, VA: The Shepherd's Press, 1986).

project at West Point to the current thesis-project conducted at Moffett Field Chapel helps to understand project design. During the original project at West Point, I did not possess the requisite resources that were at my disposal as the full-time Army chaplain at Moffett Field Chapel. As a civilian volunteer minister at West Point, I spent much of my time and effort requesting resource support from administration. Oftentimes, the support would be slow in coming. Other times, institutional priorities of the Academy competed with my goals and timelines. While more challenging to implement at West Point, we saw rapid growth in a short period of time as we began to understand how things worked.

Early Development

At Moffett, under my commander's authority, I possessed tangible ministry resources to implement the project successfully and without interruption. I had a chapel located next to the military housing and workspaces for easy access. I had a budget with which to carry out religious ministry to the chapel congregation and community. I had the support of stakeholders at the Army Reserve headquarters, Air Guard Reserve, military housing, and at NASA. I had an Army chapel service I could connect to this project and so I was able to connect others to the doctrinally specific religious education plan I had instituted. I had a potential audience of over 100 townhomes and single-family houses inside the gates of a federal airfield which happened to be inside one of the most expensive zip codes in the entire world. The upside to doing the project at Moffett Field chapel was that it was a small chapel without many preexisting programs. The project ran for twelve weeks from August 2019 to December 2019 and continued, outside of the

project, until I departed for another assignment in July of 2020. This continuation was due, in part, to the request of the participants to continue to meet using this format, described below. Their desire to continue to meet for further spiritual formation in the manner they had received for twelve weeks was encouragement to the effectiveness of this model.

Twelve-week Baptist Formation

During the twelve weeks of the project, I implemented a Baptist-specific religious education program at Moffett Field on Thursday mornings. Prior to beginning, no other religious activity was taking place except for Sunday morning worship. The regular attendance at the worship service was around 20 active duty servicemembers along with their families and some retirees. As a historical note, this chapel was shut down by the U.S. Navy in 1994 during the base realignment closures until 2014. It was reopened by the U.S Army for use by the Army and Air Guard Reserve later. Upon orders from my Army commander at Parks Reserve Forces Training Area (PRFTA) in Dublin, CA, I assumed senior pastor responsibilities for Moffett Field Chapel in August 2019. Over the next year, I worked four days at Moffett Field Chapel (Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays) and two days (Monday and Friday) at PRFTA as the Deputy Garrison Chaplain.

History and Setting

The Moffett Field Chapel community consisted of a small, enclosed military and government community south of San Francisco, close to San Jose. This community is considered part of Silicon Valley where Facebook, Google, NASA, and other TECH industry leaders call home. NASA employees work within the same facility at NASA Ames Research Center. Carnegie Mellon University and the United States Geological Service have offices at Moffett Field. Within the gated community is also a military housing community consisting of large townhomes for junior enlisted and junior officers and a small number of large single-family homes for senior officers for military fellowships and command duty. Stanford University is about ten minutes down the road from Moffett Field. The area has become an important place for military research and development where integration occurs between military and civilian counterparts to improve military technologies and capabilities.

The Army Reserve leadership agreed to reopen the chapel in 2014 to support military personnel living onsite. As a federal airfield, Moffett Field sees frequent sightings of Air Force One as well as the Vice Presidential and Presidential motorcades on its roads. In addition to military technology and Reserve personnel, the area is also an important boarding location for the active-duty Army. San Jose MEPS processes hundreds to thousands of enlisted soldiers into the Army every year just outside of the front gate of Moffett. These recruiting, and initial entry military personnel, lived and worked on Moffett Field and were important community partners.

As an important side note, while I was pastoring Moffett Field Chapel, and after having implemented the twelve-week project, the COVID-19 virus pandemic struck causing the spiritual formation group after the twelve weeks to discontinue meeting.

The Baptist-specific religious education program I implemented had the goal of teaching theologically specific material from a deep convictional level in order to determine if there was greater need for more religious specific education and worship in Army chapel programs. Essentially, I told those in attendance that the religious education was Baptist-specific doctrinal teaching. I also informed interested congregants and community members that I would be teaching doctrinal concepts out of my own belief and practice to encourage attenders to practically exercise their freedoms to dive into their own convictional beliefs and doctrinal teachings. The basis for the doctrinal teaching I carried out in the project comes from the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) edition and writings by well-known Baptist pastor and theologian, Hershel Hobbes. Every Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) chaplain is required to sign that confessional statement (Baptist Faith and Message 2000) in order to receive endorsement as Army chaplains. This confessional, though not creedal, statement informs Southern Baptist faith and practice and centers its autonomous churches around like beliefs and understanding. While every SBC church is free to believe doctrines and teachings as their church leadership and congregational-led groups determine, the majority of SBC churches have large portions of the Baptist Faith and Message included in their by-laws and mission statements without compulsion or coercion. The uniqueness of SBC churches is found in their desire to associate with other autonomous churches solely on the grounds of like faith and practice. There is no hierarchal top-down coercion for these churches to agree to ascribe to these doctrines and teachings. They do so voluntarily because they truly believe that what is written is true, right, and good. This is the

same with other denominational and faith groups. The Army does recognize this within certain religious groups, while not for others, so there is more work to be done to provide more comprehensive religious support across an ever-changing and diversified religious landscape. In this vein, the thesis-project focused on implementing a religious education program within the Army chapel system that catered to a specific theological belief system.

While potentially many senior chaplain personnel will say that specific religious education tied to worship services has been tried before, the truth of the matter is theological specific religious education and worship is only achieved within certain faith groups in the Army, as has been mentioned in my previous chapters. Catholics are allowed to hold separate worship services and provide religious training for its congregants. This has led to a more unified theological and ministerial approach for them. It has arguably led to stronger weekly attendance at Catholic programming. This model should be considered for more theologically diverse Protestant groups as well for the sole purpose of providing the most robust and authentic religious support possible to soldiers, families, and civilians. Through the years, I have heard of success stories. I have also heard stories of ministries that started out strong but dwindled or shut down later. My goal was to run this project to demonstrate that it is possible, within the command-and-control structure of the Army system, to create a viable and reproducible method for a specific group. I wanted to know if there was an actual spiritual need to go deeper into convictional faith and practice and, lastly, I sought to discover if it became successful at my location, could it potentially work in other installations. The only danger to this approach could lie in unintentionally supporting certain theological points of view over others which might subtly translate into a request to accept theological points of view supported by Army policy. In the ever-changing religious landscape of the United States Army, this, arguably, is going to be

harder to do with every new religious request. More and more religious groups are asking for accommodation in terms of space, funds, and ministry support. Sometimes during this process, simply receiving approval to have space to worship or engage in religious education can be a challenge. Every request may have to be justified against current policies, regulations, and ministries.

Initiating Religious Provision

To start the project, I initiated a request through my command to conduct Baptist religious provision. In order to request this for Moffett Field Chapel, I had to clear the request through the Army Garrison Commander and the Garrison Chaplain. This I did upon arriving to Parks Reserve Forces Training Area (PRFTA) in the summer of 2019. Due to the fact that I was the chapel pastor for Moffett Field Chapel and part of my chapel duties was to provide religious education at the chapel, this did not end up being a difficult task to accomplish. In other locations and in different circumstances, Army chaplains and civilian lay ministers can struggle to gain approval and space to conduct these types of ministry projects. I did not run up against an ongoing non-denominational Bible study either. Educational space for spiritual formation is an issue that can be overcome with precise planning and coordination, but ultimately, it boils down to a senior chaplain decision. It might be helpful to add a few lines into Army Chaplain regulations under the Garrison Chaplain section that more clearly delineates that all unit chaplains are free to request and implement religious specification from their faith and denominational tradition undergirded by the Title X clause. As long as this issue remains a

guessing game or a game of chance, it will continue to lead to junior chaplains playing it safe and keeping it local (at the unit level only). I have observed that junior chaplains oftentimes feel as though any unusual request for theological specific religious worship or education will be met with scorn or disapproval.

Well-meaning chaplains may receive unwanted attention for requesting worship or religious education specific to their denomination under current policies and regulations. But genuine convictional faith should be prioritized with soldiers, families, and civilians to facilitate stronger spiritual cores. A strong spiritual core will help soldiers with the stress of combat. It will help them to have courage. A stronger spiritual core will inevitably lead to stronger leaders. Chaplains can tell the extent to which soldiers' faith is strong and when it is weak. It is imperative for chaplains to push into policy and regulations opportunities to grow soldiers' faith, even if difficult, so that soldiers can benefit.

If one were to interview two chaplains on the word *pluralism*, one will get two different definitions for what it means. One chaplain might say pluralism is the practice of affording as many as possible in allowable religious faith traditions the opportunity to practice their religion. Another chaplain might say religious pluralism is more than provision, it is providing some general truths that all men and women in uniform can apply to become better soldiers, better teammates, and better citizens. These two views of pluralism are at odds. Oftentimes implied is the idea that chaplain ministry should cater to as many people as possible and should not intentionally alienate anyone. This ensures dignity and respect. I have observed that many junior chaplains have decided not to pursue religious specific ministry because they do not think that this is a priority for the Army, but it is priority number three in AR 165-1 which was examined back in Chapter 3. Denominational work in the hierarchy of needs, after area ministry coverage,

can involve interdenominational chapel support. Simply put, there are great challenges to trying to implement a doctrinal approach to chapel ministry programs.

Moffett Field Chapel

In my case, I was placed in-charge of the Moffett Field Chapel. I was able to set the agenda for the chapel. This is not always the case for chaplains who are wanting to start new ministries to support greater religious engagement. Since Moffett Field Chapel was a small chapel without a robust ministry, there was little competition for space and times. It was easier to inject something new into this ministry program. Furthermore, the command leadership and senior chaplain wanted an injection of new energy at the chapel. Larger chapel ministries do not always have adequate times and spaces to begin ministries outside of the ones already on the docket. Experience shows every possible avenue should be entertained by those in charge of chapels to accommodate new requests. It should be implied there are no bad requests when it comes to taking care of soldiers, their families, and civilians. Vibrant chapels are often characterized as places that are always looking to expand ministry opportunities to the installation. The word ‘no’ should be the last word coming out of the mouth of chapel pastors. The citing of competing ministries is usually the reason used to deny a request and is the argument against allowing the program in the first place.

During my project, space was not an issue. I had control of the chapel facility. I was easily able to pick the appropriate location and time for the project and was, thus, fortunate enough not to have to fight this issue at the outset. As the arrangements were made, I settled on Thursday between 11 o’clock and noon to conduct the twelve-week religious education course.

This worked out well due to the fact some NASA employees and some military personnel had met at that time previously. After meeting one of the NASA sponsors, we settled on commencing this Baptist religious education and getting the word out.

Baptist Formation in Silicon Valley

Over the course of the next twelve weeks in late summer of 2019, we met on Thursdays at 11:00 AM in Moffett Field Chapel's sanctuary for this religious specific Baptist Bible study for spiritual formation. In the weeks leading up the project, I advertised during Protestant chapel service on Sunday mornings among the 20 plus congregants who attended. My congregation had several former Baptists, but many of them were older and had become more comfortable with Catholic Mass, which was the last chapel service held at Moffett before it was shut down in 1994. I also advertised at the military housing complex and military places of work and with NASA employees, as well as Carnegie Mellon students across the street from Moffett Field chapel. During those twelve weeks, we rapidly grew in number from two to regularly over 15 adults in attendance. After we concluded the twelve-week formation, the group voted unanimously to stay together and continue the formation in the same vein and with the same direction using a book of the Bible. I suggested 1 Corinthians, which we began in January 2020 and continued until COVID-19 shut down spiritual formation on March 14, 2020.

The format for the original spiritual formation was to engage different theological topics every week. We covered what would be considered doctrinal and important as both a Baptist and a Christian. The first week (August 22, 2019) we studied why it is important to have religious convictions. We looked at what people believe and why they believe those things. This first

week was called Spiritual Convictions/Beliefs. The second week (August 29, 2019) we studied who is God and what are His attributes. The third (September 5, 2019) and fourth weeks (September 12, 2019) we studied Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Each week was taught from a Southern Baptist perspective. Interestingly, this did not scare attenders away as many might wonder. Neither did it lead to great debates or arguments as individuals vied for doctrinal dominance because none did. I informed all participants that the goal was to build consensus behind the Baptist materials presented and seek to edify each other in convictional truth. This approach worked well. It led to positive personal outcomes and very positive social connections between unlikely groups. Several consistent attenders shared that this formational discipleship model helped them to clarify some of their theological holes. Others commented that it was a joy to find commonality with other Christians from other backgrounds. Even more found that by having a strong stance on matters of God it helped push against some deeply held biases and interpretations. From a social perspective, our group ranged from NASA engineers to Google bus drivers to Army spouses to everything in between.

Weeks five through eight (September 19th, 26th, October 3rd, 10th) focused on the Bible, Salvation, Believer's Baptism, Discipleship, and the Lord's Supper (Communion). During these weeks, attenders ran squarely into Baptist belief and practice in terms of what the Bible is and what it means. These weeks lined out the qualifications for baptism, what it is and what it is not, and defined how communion should be understood in the context of the local church. Many of the attenders were members of non-Baptist churches in the Bay Area of San Francisco. Yet, many of these non-Baptists who attended held faith and belief in these same doctrinal truths. We discovered, as we worked through doctrinal belief, other Christian groups believed very similar things. Doctrinal similarities appeared during spiritual formation as those things were addressed.

Having conducted numerous classes through the years, it is more apparent that being convictional can lead to better results than by just pursuing big tent ideas without solid doctrine. While many who attended were evangelical or theologically conservative, there were some who attended who could be characterized as theologically moderate or liberal. Those individuals appreciated the conviction behind the teaching because it was credible and stable and served as an anchor. This was reiterated in the surveys and during our closing session as I talked with them about their perspective on this Baptistic approach. One attender mentioned that they were surprised at how many Christians like them were present in this area. Those from other theological backgrounds became better informed to the Baptist position of salvation and the believer's baptism, and rather than leading to blowout arguments and uncivil discourse, it led to greater understanding of doctrinal positions. It clearly helped to strengthen individual beliefs and practice.

In weeks nine through twelve (October 17th, 24th, 31st & November 7th) I led the growing group through topics like the Priesthood of Believers, the World, Flesh and the Devil, the Church on Mission, and used the last week (November 7) to wrap-up with surveys. As we got closer to the end of the spiritual formation, it became clear that this group should continue and, as they were, they would willingly continue to grow and support religious engagement in the Moffett Field community. This group was reaching military personnel, NASA employees, Carnegie Mellon employees, Google employees, and military retirees, all sub-groups in existence around Moffett Field. It is the perception the largest Christian demographic in the Bay Area and surrounding Moffett Field Chapel is Catholic based on visible signs. This project was not conducted in the Baptist Bible Belt of the Southeast. It was conducted in an area generally without many Baptist churches and chaplains. The makeup of our group demonstrated to me that

individuals of all faith backgrounds are interested in deeper convictional faith practices. This is starkly opposed to the viewpoint that spiritual doctrine must be kept at a general level of accepted knowledge and belief. People, who want to go deeper, exist everywhere. I believe these kinds of people will continue to be interested in doctrinal teaching from chaplains and ministers. Religious programming should seek to acknowledge the importance that convictional belief plays in Christian faith. If religious programming fails to meet this need, it will continue to lead to greater disengagement by people. Less religious engagement runs counter to the Army's goal of building spiritually strong military personnel who can survive the hardships of military combat.

Each spiritual formation week's outline (Appendix B) and the close-out participant survey (Appendix C) and its survey results (Appendix D) are found at the end of this paper.

Survey Conclusions

The close-out surveys (Appendix C) I passed out on the last week of the spiritual formation included 41 questions on religious specification in Army chapel settings. Not all the individuals who took the survey were in an active or reserve military setting, but most had military backgrounds, and were generally retired military. The results of the surveys, which quantify the congregant answers are found in Appendix D (Survey Data Analysis). The majority of the survey questions ask questions in which the congregant answer in the affirmative or in the negative. For these questions, I evaluated the number of affirmative to negative answers to understand congregant viewpoints on particular issues. In addition, several questions asked

congregants to rate on a scale of 1-10 particular ministry items. For those questions in Appendix D, averages have been established using a pivot chart. Also, if a survey question did not apply to the congregant, they were asked to skip the question, which led to some not applicable answers highlighted in Appendix D.

This concluded the practical ministry portion of the project and showed me several things upon its conclusion in December of 2019. First, it exposed, again, that what may seem routine or ordinary in certain ministry environments like Army chapels is not always the case. To the untrained eye, it might seem there was no need for what our group engaged in. It might seem redundant or exclusive, but that is far from the truth. This group gathered a mix-matched collection of Christians to study under one solid doctrinal set of beliefs allowing the diversity of the group (Baptists, Catholics, Non-Denominationalists, Bible Church, Episcopalians, and Methodists) to lean on their reflections and experiences to enhance the discussion. Rather than generalizing formation to a level that no one can believe in, and that by simply doing so more people could be included, all participants here studied together deep convictional truths set forth by one specific denomination. Specifying doctrine gives participants that heavily weighted anchor with which to explore the spiritual waters of belief with the safety net of organized religion.

The second conclusion I came to because of this study was that we should always strive to practice our faith calling in the context God has given us with deep seated conviction. I chose to focus predominately on Baptist faith tradition because this is where I was formed and brought up in the Christian faith. I come from a long line of Southern Baptists who go back to the 1700s in the state of North Carolina in one of the oldest Baptist churches in the state. As I look back through my own faith heritage, I am struck by the fact that, while my denomination is by no

means perfect or without fault on all matters and issues, it is a place that has fostered positive religious activity and growth for my family for many generations. The Baptist tradition has a proven track record for providing, to my family, the moral and faith teachings necessary to worship and love God and exist as a solid member of a community. The participant surveys (Appendix C) that were administered after the twelve-week Baptist spiritual formation helped me to evaluate what transpired over that time.

As the first step, the practical execution of the thesis-project gave me valuable raw data (Appendix D) that I was able to glean from the participant surveys that present and future practitioners can use. As part of that analytical effort, I compiled data from the project regarding the information discussed which increased practical, sociological, and theological perspectives of the attendees. The data focused on gauging the same three ideas for worship and instruction**.** These three focus points steered the conversation during each week's spiritual formation.

Ultimately, I have determined that the Army's interests for each servicemember is in their ability to practice their faith while a soldier and is spelled out in countless regulations, plans, and mission statements. Because of this emphasis, it is important to evaluate whether participants feel the same way about the Army's role in ensuring each servicemember's ability to exercise their faith. I also hypothesized that the Army seems to also maintain interest in how religion and the practice of it affects sociological aspects of the whole organization under current regulations and guidelines. I constructed the formation weeks and surveys and wanted to understand how this new paradigm approach to chapel ministry could create either a net positive or net negative toward the Army's sociological goals. I needed participants to help me understand how they perceive the ministry approach of Army chapel programs because in terms of those goals, the Army has continued to discuss things like dignity and respect, equity, equality, and cohesion.

The Army has spent a lot of time on leadership and professionalism. It has reordered regulations and initiatives to ensure new burgeoning religious and ethnic groups entering service have access to their religious leaders, space, and resources. Finally, it is, and has always been, very interested in maintaining good order and discipline within the ranks, realizing that those two hallmarks of the United States Army are crucial to its success in over 240 plus years of existence.

On the last week of the official project, I asked spiritual formation attendees to participate in a forty-one question survey (Appendix C) on the twelve-week, Baptist spiritual formation course. I was able to get most of the participants who had been regular attenders to fill out the survey over the next few weeks. Of the nine surveys completed, results are shown in Appendix D, seven were filled out by males. Two of the surveys represented females. Four of the surveys were filled out by White/Caucasians, three by Asians, one by a Hispanic, and one by two or more races. The spiritual formation course leaned heavily male, but in terms of ethnicity, leaned more in diversity of the surrounding area of Silicon Valley. Of the nine surveys, only two represented current in-service personnel. Seven participants were in a civilian status either as retired military, retired spouse, or never served. In terms of what Army chapels look like today, depending on the location and service, there are many retirees and civilians who attend. Normally, these individuals retired at the installation or near it. The Moffett Field Chapel group represented a solid comparison to other chapel locations with limited active-duty personnel and a larger retiree population. This is due to having a long, active-duty Navy and Air Force presence in the area since the 1930s and, in part, due to Moffett Field having a large commissary that all branch service retirees in the Bay area utilize for groceries which are typically more cost effective than regular grocery stores.

In addition to some of these demographic factors, most participants identified with conservative or ultra-conservative Christian beliefs (Appendix D). This is interesting in an area known for having a strong liberal and non-religious atmosphere. Conservative Christians found this Baptist spiritual formation course, while at the same time, did not limit others from attending as well.

Of those who answered the survey, only two participants described themselves as moderate theologically (Appendix D). It should be stated, for the record, that I do not teach or preach from a moderate theological perspective and yet, these participants were not dissuaded. When I advertised for this spiritual formation group, I placed an invitation at every residence of every military house on Moffett Field. This was approved by housing prior to providing flyers to those residences. There was not any intentional recruitment of Baptist attenders. As a result, the group that we ended up with was partially from those who saw the advertisement and decided to attend and those who were invited to attend by the first group. The only intentional recruitment I conducted was directed to Moffett Field Protestant worship service regular members who leaned Catholic. In a larger setting, with intentional recruitment and advertisement to Baptists, I believe the impact would have been even greater. Without verbalizing it, many might believe people would choose not to attend if the teacher/instructor was from a diametrically opposite side of the theological spectrum. This did not end up being the case for all those who attended the formation regularly. No one had to be a Baptist or have Baptist roots to participate in this study. Exploring the faith and denominational background of the survey, I found that only two were Baptists. Besides these, our group had three non-denominational members, two Presbyterians, one Catholic, and one whose group was not listed on the survey menu. Overall, as the theological slant of the group was generally conservative and biblical, it was still not solidly one

denominational group, a very common occurrence in Army chapel programs today. Army chapel programs are some of the most diverse worship and ministry programs one will find anywhere in religious life and is one of the great upsides. Many ministers have spent much of their vocational careers working with people who look and culturally think alike, but Army chapels offer something different. This is one of the most pointed arguments for keeping things the way they are now within the system because it provides opportunities for culturally diverse people to gather to worship God. Essentially, understanding those who are against making major changes helps to shape the argument and, as ideas clash, the sparks should effectively promote the best possible solutions for the spiritual growth of soldiers and their families.

The survey analysis (Appendix D) depicts a diverse group of people who lean conservative and evangelical. This group of individuals came together more out of a general desire to engage in spiritual formation than for the fact that everyone was from the same camp of thought. Most participants did acknowledge they had grown up around Southern Baptist churches and often attended. They felt comfortable with the Baptist theological perspective. Essentially, while they were not Baptists, except for two, they all felt a strong connection and affinity for the theology and discipleship regimen of Southern Baptists. I represented this doctrine and practice both as the teacher and as a follower.

What Is Taught

This reality leads me to the perceived truth that the *what* is as important as the *who*. The *who* matters in terms of ensuring the rights and privileges of each servicemember, retiree, or

dependent (spouse and children). The *what* matters to those who take spiritual formation seriously to apply it to their lives. This spiritual application is an important cause for the individual's religious success and thus, provides more opportunities for the *who* to gather to study the *what* and reap great rewards for those religious programs. Chapel programs oftentimes provide generic spiritual formation surrounding the latest popular materials because they believe this is what people want to study. But I argue that the content of the religious instruction and the safeguarding of certain doctrines and beliefs should have equal footing to how a program brings diverse people and views together without picking one prevailing viewpoint. It may seem counter-intuitive that running a Baptist-specific religious education would bring a diverse group together. I made it no secret that I was picking a viewpoint and that I wanted to teach from this viewpoint to discern if it brought a net positive or net negative to the Army's agenda. Clearly, the patently Baptist spiritual formation project provided a net positive for our community at Moffett among a diverse religious landscape based on the survey questions that indicated that a majority of participants were interested in continuing and participating in more religious specific religious education.

Interestingly, question eleven of the survey (Appendix C), which asks which chapel service a survey taker would most likely attend, helps one to clarify the expectation of some groups. Of those surveyed, six responded that they would most likely attend a Traditional/Protestant chapel service. While not always the case, in the twenty-first century Traditional/Protestant chapel services more often than not do not include religious education or spiritual formation anymore. The data highlights the reality in those services that they are often looking for more than just a worship service. No longer the predominate service at most installations, yet still maintaining consistent attendance, these services have morphed not

completely but majorly to worship services only. This data is helpful to answer the question: which type of chapel service would be most inclined to participate in religious specific formation as a part of its chapel program? The Traditional/Protestant service may be a good place to start such a program due to the interest of the congregants I surveyed. In my personal experience dealing with this subject, I attempted to have an identical spiritual formation class the hour before worship on Sunday, but only one congregant came for several weeks. In the place where one would have thought the momentum would have been located, it was not present, which was puzzling to be frank. The Thursday formation class associated with the workers at Moffett that was the project's main effort ended up having more success. Many congregational attenders to the worship service had Catholic backgrounds stemming from the closing of the chapel in 1994, which also included closing the Catholic chapel service. While not a great indication to the complete reason, it is a data point that must be considered in determining why the Traditional/Protestant congregants were more inclined to engage in spiritual formation. In recruiting, recruiters often talk about going where the market is or talk about market-driven recruiting. I realized that I would have to go where people were and invite them into religious engagement. In doing so, they would be informed. Once the word got out that there was this type of spiritual formation happening within such close proximity to where these folks lived and worked, we began to pick up attenders. All were church attenders and most were very serious about their faith. The traditions and practices of the Christian church are things this group of people are concerned about. While the congregants of the chapel I served at were less interested participating in more than Sunday morning worship even though it was hard to determine if they were engaged in any other discipleship or spiritual formation, we found people who were. The data seems to indicate serious Christians who are always seeking to grow and learn will be

interested in this type of spiritual formation. As chapels look to find and gather high-quality people to help them carry out the work of the chapel, developing a strong spiritual formation program may assist these efforts.

Highlighted in the survey (Appendix C) with the responses to question number 12 which asked, "how well do you think Protestant chapel services are meeting the needs of religious participants?" Of the nine survey responses, the average response was 8.33 (see Appendix D, question 12). This means that participants who were engaged in the spiritual formation and, in some cases in Protestant chapel on Sundays, found that those two things were adequate. While this is not surprising when considering this survey is related to a small chapel ministry, if asked of a thriving church community, it would likely lead to a much lower average score. Local churches often conduct more programs/ministries than worship and adult spiritual formation. This score may have more to do with small chapel expectations. A larger Army chapel survey might lead to a lower score if the only two major programs were spiritual formation and Sunday worship.

Similarly, in response to question 13 which asks, "more specifically, how well do you think chapel service categories (Traditional, Chapel Next, Liturgical, Gospel) are meeting religious preference needs for worship," the average score out of ten was 9.33 (see Appendix D, question 13). A whole point higher, the survey takers believed overwhelmingly that what is provided now is adequate for meeting religious preference needs for worship. While this does not support the need for change or the need for innovation, it shows that those who attend are content with Army chapel programming. There is an important distinction in that reality; it does not give an indication of those who do not attend or who have cause not to attend. Surveying in-service personnel who do not attend any chapel service or programming may provide better data

as to the reasons they do not participate. Overwhelming in my survey (Appendix C), those who had been regular chapel attenders believe the Army chapel is providing adequately. This is a solid data point for senior leaders. When compared to larger military posts or off post civilian churches, undoubtedly there is a large disparity with defining adequate. In terms of the Army's understanding of the word, there is an implied expectation of providing for as many Army personnel as possible with the resources it offers within the limitations of time and space and personal choice.

Equally enlightening were the responses to survey question number sixteen (Appendix C), which asked: do you feel that your faith/denominational beliefs are sufficiently represented in Protestant chapel services? Of the respondents, seven believed their faith beliefs were adequately represented in Protestant chapel services. Essentially, they were under the conviction the Protestant chapel services reflected their beliefs. While this may or may not be true, they believe those services are adequate. In fact, those services and programs may not completely reflect their faith tradition, but they are inclined to believe that they do. Ultimately, a Protestant chapel program may have major points of agreement but when compared in parallel to a particular denominational group, it will have discrepancies. Those discrepancies are difficult for chaplains who can at times struggle coming to terms with the minor nuances of faith and practice. While the major points of agreement are praiseworthy and notable, it is potentially the minor points of disagreement that can cause congregants to choose to go to a place with more faith specificity. The point is that the minor points can make major ripples when accommodated ineffectively. People who are giving a lot to attend a General Protestant chapel service will have to decide what they are willing to tolerate that they do not fully believe. While the survey respondents felt positive about chapel's relevance to their faith tradition there is the potential it is a calculated

choice or a choice out of ignorance. The calculated choice is about what one is willing to tolerate. The choice out of ignorance is what this thesis-project is all about; enhancing knowledge to make more bold requests for accommodation and more informed choices in that accommodation.

It must be said, personal choice should not be underestimated. I have heard in-service personnel tell me, over and over, that they do not want to come on post on the weekends. They see the Army as a weekly concept that interrupts their weekend disconnection. I have heard others say that they live far from the installation and coming back for worship or spiritual formation is difficult. Then again, many others have shared that they attend Army chapel because they have not found a church like their home church. Essentially, regionalism leads Army families to attend chapel when they might attend an off-post church if it was more like their home church in another part of the country. They have told me they are from another region of the country and nothing off post resonates with them culturally or spiritually. They attend chapel because they cannot relate to the churches in the area. This is another important point.

If army families are willing to consider Army chapels due to not being able to connect with local churches, the Army must take this into consideration. These individuals may be looking for the kind of church or doctrinal perspective they value. They may also value the fact that they are serving in a unique occupation, the military, and appreciate shared experience with other military personnel. If Army families gathered in ministry groups of shared beliefs and practices more tightly on post, it would, in theory, meet their need wherever military orders take them. They could join a group of Baptists on an Army installation in Japan, or they could join a group of Baptists at an Army installation in upstate New York. Instead of every permanent change of station (PCS) move being dependent on the local churches, these transient population

groups could potentially plan to seek out their affinity group on any military installation if it were available to them. To craft and shape future religious support across the Army and across the globe, this kind of program would, arguably, be highly prized by chaplains and soldiers alike. It could lead to more shepherds leading folks within the context of like faith and practice in worship and spiritual formation. It could lead to more chaplains being engaged in both weekly, and weekend, religious programs.

Army families have shared they have had trouble finding a new church home off post at some installations. Others have claimed they felt most comfortable around other military personnel living in the same culture. Yet others have decided to attend chapel services merely because of the proximity of the chapel to their housing/quarters on post. Army families have even visited chapels only to stop attending because the religious program is not theologically specific enough to mesh with their beliefs. I see this tension, as mentioned in previous chapters because of being, at times, too general in our application of Protestant ministry. It is imperative to find new ways to meet specific religious needs. This can be done by bringing doctrinally agreeable groups, or affinity groups, together in spiritual formation and worship in ways that are not being done currently. Plausibly, in an affinity group spiritual formation construct, these families could join with more general groups for a big tent worship service and community fellowship. An example of where I saw this work well in general was at Crossroads Chapel at Fort Benning from 2013-2015.

Crossroad Chapels at Fort Benning

I participated in a spiritual formation program linked to Crossroads Chapel Service from 2013-2015 at Fort Benning. This contemporary service did not have a specific doctrinal perspective except for that which the supporting chaplains provided weekly from their denominational backgrounds. The spiritual formation hour that preceded corporate worship involved five to seven formation classes on topics ranging from finances to popular Christian inspirational materials. The studies did not overly pursue a doctrinal perspective. Additionally, the program did not make the focus the doctrinal beliefs of any certain religious denominations. It fell on the chaplains to inject those points into their instruction. The program at Crossroads was successful but could have been expanded to meet congregants' religious needs through more overt specification.

In questions seventeen through twenty-six (Appendix C), I asked questions to specific theological groups (Baptist, Evangelicals, Conservatives, Reformed). In an attempt to pinpoint those classifications, I asked only those who believe they were of that religious background to answer the particular question. Assessing all ten questions and the responses, about half had zero connection to the group I was targeting with each of the questions, which led to not-applicable responses. But, of those who felt an affinity with a particular group in the questions one to four respondents answered affirming they were exposed to foreign religious practices in a chapel service. Essentially for the respondents who felt, for instance, Baptist or reformed or evangelical, there were responses that they in the past had to participate in faith practices that did not match with their belief and practice. A larger survey that had more respondents of the targeted group would have inevitably led to more important data. The belief is that the more convictional and staunch a religious group is about its doctrine, theology and practice, the more likely it will not want to compromise. If chapel services were full of compromisers, it may be in

fact because they have chosen to ignore minor points of disagreement. The groups I targeted in questions seventeen through twenty-six, when identified as such, showed there was the potential that they were exposed to things they did not believe or practice. Said another way, of those who identified with the question, which led to a yes/no answer, about half the time those respondents experienced a quandary of faith. Imagine if I multiplied these small numbers by one thousand, there would be a lot of people who were practicing faith out of ignorance or possibly out of calculated choice, rather than out of convictional faith. This makes a strong case for enhanced catechesis or discipleship. On two fronts, those who are looking for more and those who do not know what they believe, an increased focus on spiritual formation would benefit them both.

Survey question twenty-seven (Appendix C) asked respondents to detail areas where Protestant chapel services could improve to meet the needs of congregants in the twenty-first century. Overwhelming, respondents provided ways chapels can improve. Often the improvements mentioned were centered around theological points of interest like preaching on sin or having a response time after the sermon for congregants to respond to God's calling. The respondents possibly unknowingly provided theological rational for improvements more so than social or communal critiques. Social and communal arguments are definitely an aspect of Christian theology, but it can be argued by many, including myself, that they have gone too far into a generalized construct that potentially alienates devout congregants.

Question thirty-four of the survey (Appendix C) asked respondents this: during Protestant services, do you feel there is a sermon topic that is off limits for chaplains to preach on? Of the nine respondents, five said there were topics that were probably off limits for chaplains. This speaks to the congregant's view of a chaplain's ability to preach the full counsel of Scripture without impediment. Survey respondents believed they were hamstrung by government policies

and internal pressures. In order to carry out a kind of theological mean for Protestant services, chaplain pastors feel constrained on some topics knowing they are hotly debated and also not favored by current policies. Their view of a chaplain's ability to preach what God tells them to preach is insightful. If chaplains are hamstrung from preaching and teaching specific doctrinal truths due to government policies and internal pressures, it may actually, unknowingly be a contributing factor to the over generalization and the lack of religious specificity within Army chapels today.

Then, question thirty-seven (Appendix C) gets to the heart of the argument when it asks survey respondents this: if Protestant chapel services provided faith-specific small groups as part of a chapel ministry, would you be likely to attend one if it was focused on your faith tradition i.e. Baptist, etc? Two-thirds of respondents said yes or maybe to the question of attending a faith-specific small group within the chapel ministry. They would participant in spiritual formation or catechesis if offered from their specific faith background and they would still attend the active Protestant chapel service. It demonstrates the possibility of developing religiously specific formational groups within the umbrella of the more generalized chapel service program. This has not been done to great effect in the recent past as has been described in previous chapters. If it only took starting religious specific formation to grow a chapel congregation and better care for an Army installation's spiritual needs, why would one not want to do it? The answer is probably that they would want to start one immediately to carry out a more effective ministry. The survey responses to question thirty-seven further highlight that by simply understanding what congregants would participate in against our own unseen bias or never before asked questions, it will lead to more positive growth for the chapel program.

When asked in survey question thirty-nine if survey respondents' chapel service had a particular doctrine it followed, only two out of nine thought that their service did. A majority were unsure, which is troubling, and another section emphatically said no. Overwhelming in the small group survey study, the respondents did not think chapels were doctrinally-rooted. For devout Christians doctrinal rooting is of paramount importance. With survey respondents' lack of faith in chapel doctrinal rooting, it is no wonder chapel skeptics abound. Some might say that those who care about this issue go somewhere else and those who do avoid getting mixed up in the minors are more likely to attend. The practice of faith is essentially what is being argued here. Does it matter what a person believes in how they carry out their faith?

Finally, the survey asked survey participants a final question. The question stated: if offered by the chapel (by chaplains from the same or similar faith tradition) as a way of strengthening faith convictions, would you be interested in participating in a multi-week small group focused on doctrine and practical application? Again, the majority answered yes or maybe with only a small number saying no. The point that can be made is that it is hard to pass up on something that one values and desires as one's religious expression of faith. To participate in a spiritual formation process with people who value and uphold the same truths as another does, one could argue, is a round peg in a round hole, instead of the proverbial square peg in a round hole. Essentially in this construct one is matching faith expression with faith-tailored programming. Some groups in the Army have better tailored programming (which was discussed in Chapter One), but Protestant groups, I believe, lag behind in this area. Survey respondents were not quick to answer in the negative and pass up on the survey's hypothetical opportunity that one could argue devout Christian followers would be interested in pursuing on Army installations.

Greater Orthopraxy

The design of the thesis-project was meant to be the "so what" of the practical ministry project. It was designed to determine if this ministry approach brings greater meaning to religious orthopraxy. It was also designed to establish if this approach could bring greater meaning to one's correct understanding of doctrine and theology. It asks the question whether people can unite more closely under a sociological connection within the Army. It also asks if this approach is reproducible in a different context and if military personnel are keen to engage in this level of religious specificity in order to increase the practical, sociological, and theological understandings of people? The answers to these questions are answered in Chapter 5: Recommendations and Outcomes. In both instances, in my work at West Point and Moffett Field Chapel, our program saw strong movements and spiritual successes. New pathways in ministry contexts often have a slower start but can produce a legacy of spiritual good for those who are involved and stay the course.

The main successes of Moffett Field were seen in its ability to spiritually guide people to exercise matters of conscience without compromise. These types of programs demonstrate a solid basis for how a future model could be deployed within the Army chapel system.

The surveys (Appendix C) I conducted with people were meant to help me to understand how they viewed these religious models. They were also necessary to success if there is, indeed, a need not currently being met consistently across the force and where to flesh out nuances where small changes could make greater impact in Army chapel programs and services. My hope

was that I might have data I could use to tailor religious provision to constituent groups within the Army in a much better way. The surveys helped me discern the problem more clearly. I believe these surveys showcase inherent successes with current implementation and subtle problems with the current model that affects spiritual vitality in the ranks. The data may lead to a stronger affirmation that the status quo is the best functional ministry construct available. I am still convinced that there is more that current and future chaplain practitioners can do to beneficially meet spiritual health needs of individuals within the Army body.

Design Goals

The project design had several goals. First, my goal was to answer the thesis-project question without using my own presuppositions. A biased presupposition could have been that Army constituents unanimously wanted drastic changes to how Army chapels are run and that would have skewed the data. Secondly, my goal was to engage methodologically with the subject to find new truths to explore in order to share outcomes and recommendations to the practitioner community. To arrive at this goal, I needed to ask the right questions and develop the right project to lead to better religious accommodation for all groups within the Army, not just Baptists.

Since the Baptist tradition is my faith tradition and belief foundation within Evangelical Christianity, I was able to approach the topic with conviction. For instance, if I had approached the project as though I were non-denominational in faith and practice, I would have not been able to truly deliver the spiritual formation class with full conviction. I believe the thesis-project design is unique in how it approaches its application within Army chapel programs. The project

design is, in many ways, something I had self-interest in as a chaplain and Baptist minister. This fact helped become an important factor in aiding me to keep momentum and focus during the entire project.

The surveys (Appendix C) conducted in conjunction with spiritual formation were voluntary. Based on research methodology instruction, anonymity and confidentiality are vitally important to survey takers. The survey takers answered questions that were non-attributional (see Appendix C, question 1). In that vein, I developed the survey so nothing could realistically identify a survey taker. I also developed the survey so survey takers felt they were getting a chance to provide honest feedback. If the survey takers felt the survey was ultimately for them and could spark more dialogue about this topic, it could potentially increase participation. Survey analysis is found in Appendix D (Survey Data Analysis). While many inferred that the Chaplain Corps has already effectively adapted its Protestant worship requirements, others continue to desire better, more fully scoped paradigms.

The third prong of my project design was to utilize analytical tools to understand what the practical application and the research assert in relationship to the thesis-project question. The professional looking survey included a cover letter. It highlighted anonymity and confidentiality and described the value of the survey to understanding chapel programs and beliefs. It also posed practical, sociological, theological, and demographic questions to aid discovery. The Army is currently experiencing an ever-diversifying religious landscape. Theology is important to ministers and congregants. It was imperative that I ask about how theological literacy in the Army can be improved. Also, I used demographic information and open-ended questions to accept surveys from all types of participants. The questions were focused on religious specification. In constructing the survey, I had hoped everyone who took it would feel included

in the conversation about religious provision. In those deep channels of uncoordinated participant thought, I found informative data. Its purpose was to better understand outcomes and submit recommendations to the thesis-project question on how I could effectively implement a Baptist-specific worship and religious education component into any Army chapel system leading to an improved practical, sociological, and theological experience. And I believe the survey's outcome did what I asked it to do.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The responsibility of every Christian is not to bring the lost to the Gospel but to take the Gospel to the lost. [1]

—Roy Fish, *Every Member Evangelism*

Introduction

In conclusion, my goal was to engage in a practical ministry project from my theological background, recruit local church support where possible to the project, and provide research to explore how I could effectively implement a Baptist-specific worship and religious education component into any Army chapel system leading to an improved practical, sociological and theological experience**.** I believe that throughout this eight-year journey from the fall of 2014 that continues today as I serve as an Army chaplain at Fort Hood, Texas, I have learned a great deal that is valuable for ministry practitioners, especially other Army chaplains. I believe everything I learned as a chaplain practitioner provides strong and definitive conclusions and recommendations out of the ministry project, the local church support, project design surveys, and ministry success stories.

My goal was not to prove I was right in espousing the need for doctrinally specific spiritual formation, but to find out if this approach to religious provision could become a successful paradigm across a larger context. My hope is that in making every effort to ensure the

1. Fish, Roy. Every Member Evangelism (New York, NY: Harper Row, 1976).

data and practical ministry project resulted in an accurate and honest representation that it would benefit practitioners who may have interest in this topic in the future. My secondary goal was to conduct practical ministry leading to better religious provision for all groups within the Army, not just those from the Baptist tradition.

On a personal note, the thesis-project is important for me and many others who have found themselves running military ministry programs which do not adequately provide for specific faith convictions. It is also important that we ask the question of whether matters of conscience and conviction matter within religious provision and lead to positive outcomes? The spiritual vitality of practical, sociological, and theological aspects of every faith group within the military community is important to leaders, chapel constituents, local leaders, and chaplains. Spiritual vitality leads people to hold to theological concepts like freedom of conscience, soul competency, and the priesthood of believers. These are hallmarks of doctrine within the Baptist faith tradition, which a greater population of religious adherents will be able to consider as they are encouraged to seek a deeper faith and understanding of their own. This deepening faith practice is possible within the chapel framework, but spiritual formation must be crafted to meet those needs better. From the project and analysis standpoints, I have three general recommendations for future Army chapels as well as several secondary recommendations for consideration. I will discuss possible outcomes and the Army Chaplaincy's future moving into 2029 as they implement new paradigms to build more spiritually ready soldiers and families.

Recommendation 1

To take into consideration first, Army chapels should implement a more consistent spiritual formation ministry at every chapel service on each installation. Currently, Army chapels run discipleship classes through a number of different scenarios depending on the chapel and installation. Fort Hood, for instance, runs spiritual formation through a religious education program called Community Connections. This program is supervised by one of the directors of religious education (DRE). It tends to meet at nights during the week or at lunch at the Spirit of Fort Hood Chapel complex. The classes are open to anyone on post. The marketing relies on the Garrison Chaplain's Office to send out advertisements about the classes through unit chaplains. Of the over 80 Army Chaplains currently at Fort Hood, only one Army Chaplain is teaching a Community Connections class. In theory, unit chaplains are running spiritual formation in their unit area of operation (AO). The reality is that running morning or lunch studies always runs up against unit mission priorities, which experience shows leads to big ebbs and flows with attendance and not much solid consistency.

Exploring the program guide for the current fiscal year for Community Connections at Fort Hood, there are several classes taught by lay civilian personnel and one Army chaplain. Generally, the spiritual formation classes seem to survey a range of topics from church history to Christian faith living. Most seem inter-denominational or non-denominational in focus. The status quo argument is that through the DREs, Garrison Chaplains are providing religious education through things like Community Connections. This, and other religious programs, are making positive strides at spiritual readiness, but oftentimes mostly benefit the retired community as opposed to active-duty personnel. The active population is constrained by mission requirements and things like time and space. The military funds DRE positions to assist in

providing religious education to installations. This fact is true and is working, to a degree. The issue is that religious education oftentimes is disconnected from Army chapel congregations and unit chaplains in the local church fashion because it is marketed to a large population instead of targeting specific religious groups. The reality is that if Army chapels intend to operate more like local churches for the purpose of greater improvement, by providing synchronized ministry, it becomes potentially advantageous to link religious education more responsibly to the Army chapel services on post. For example, during my time at Fort Benning from 2013-2015, I saw this done well. At the Crossroads Chapel Service, the senior pastor led the pastoral staff to develop an hour time slot just before worship for spiritual formation. Spiritual formation classes were usually taught by Army chaplains who started them at the beginning of the school year. Similarly, the range of topics were anywhere from books of the Bible to parenting to financial concerns. I led a spiritual formation group on finances that met in the evening during the week. The class was made up of people who attended Crossroads' chapel service who wanted to challenge themselves to dig deeper. Overall, I believe we retained most of those signed up, grew spiritually, and built stronger social relationships. To be sure, this is not a new ministry paradigm. Most would consider this the Sunday school or discipleship paradigm, popularized in the twentieth century. Typically, Sunday school models usually follow a strongly theological slant. This paradigm is like old models as it seeks to improve theological understanding through formation groups. Chapel services, due to factors like reductions in the emphasis on religious education directly through chapel services and more focus executing the worship service, have reduced spiritual formation directly through the chapel service. The argument goes that those chapel services which maintain spiritual formation as a priority probably tend to have larger religious engagement leading to greater spiritual readiness and more vibrant social and

community engagement. Religious activity and engagement improve spiritual readiness across the force.

If every service on post, and all new services in the future, built chapel service programs with intentional spiritual formation tailored to that religious body, spiritual readiness, would in theory, grow. Admittedly, this requires a major overhaul of how the resources and ministry positions are designed through the Garrison Chaplain's Office. This would require Garrison Chaplains and unit chaplains support which would be vital to providing the sheer number of spiritual formation classes necessary to meet all the necessary requirements. For instance, if the Chapel Next service needed six Army Chaplains to provide six unique spiritual formation classes in the hour prior to worship every Sunday, it would mean serious dialogues between higher echelon chaplain supervisors and garrison personnel. It would mean certain religious activities would be deprioritized while spiritual formation became a priority. It would mean more preparation and recruitment time for chaplains across the entire work week. It would lead possibly to moving from having counselor chaplains to needing more religious formation chaplains. Ultimately, the Army cannot lose if chaplains are teaching people to obey the tenets of their religious faith more sincerely. It could possibly mean that more advanced civilian schooling opportunities open for chaplains to improve their spiritual formation professional skills. Instead of counseling degrees and world religion degrees, chaplains would need more opportunities to pursue masters in theology or Christian ministry and doctorates of ministry and philosophy degrees. Improving spiritual formation would mean improving practical and theological ministry training with orthodoxy (right knowledge) and orthopraxy (right practice). It would require DREs to coordinate religious education more closely through the chapel services as opposed to a

separate and distinct ministry program. It would require officiating unit chaplains to have backup instructors/teachers if unit mission responsibilities require them to be away.

Some might consider this recommendation an old concept, this paradigm is new in several ways. It takes the historical past and its successes and repackages it to meet today's spiritual needs, needs that never diminish. Requiring all chapel services to conduct spiritual formation is a major muscle movement. Recent regulations did not exist when Sunday school classes and other forms of religious education were in vogue, so it has become more difficult to accomplish doctrine specific formation. One reason is that regulations have made volunteering in Army chapels more difficult, not only for soldiers and their families, but also for chaplains. One civilian worker manages the funds and resources necessary to implement religious education across the Army installation. Requests for resources may go outside of this channel but end up using chapel tithes and offerings for things that have budgetary line items at appropriated and non-appropriated fund levels. These fund sources, appropriated and non-appropriated funds, are typically used to fund religious education materials and programs. The Garrison Chaplain's Office oversees religious education. If every chapel service was allocated an amount of money for religious education, instead, through chapel tithes and offerings, it would alleviate part of the financial burden that makes chapel congregations refrain from those expenses in favor of community outreach. Chapel community outreach events usually take up much of the budgetary spending of chapel services. Chaplain salaries are paid by the United States Government. Socials, picnics, outreaches, retreats, and unit chaplain support are usually where CPBAC council meetings spend non-appropriated funds.

A further problem with chapel tithes and offerings being the funding source for chapel-specific spiritual formation is inadequate tithing. Based on the types of personnel attending

services and the weekly attendance numbers, which include active, reserve, and retired groups, one would expect the giving to be higher than it typically is. A chapel service of 20 family groups tithing ten percent of their active or retired income to the chapel, with an average salary of $60,000 per year, would amount to $120,000 per year. The reality is that many receive disability and retirement and continue to work. Spouses are primary volunteers within chapel programs. Historically, chapel offerings do not stay competitive with local church giving if populations are the same even though military salaries, on average, are higher than civilian averages. Added to low tithing, the long-held requirement to support unit chaplains' ministry to soldiers in tenant units demonstrates that funds are not limitless. If spiritual formation is dependent upon chapel tithes and offerings, there is the potential it will be given a lower prioritization over socials, fellowships, retreats, unit chaplain support, and other chapel activities as has been the case for so long already.

The other challenge to large scale spiritual formation is childcare. Unfortunately, this has not been solved at every installation. It is also worth noting that each installation operates slightly differently. Some installations have strong partnerships between Child Youth Services (CYS) and Army chapels. These partnerships benefit the religious community while also supporting local workers. Spiritual formation classes require childcare to be effective. Single parents and married couples will not take spiritual formation classes seriously if there is not childcare provided, especially on Sunday mornings. Left unsolved, this issue is enough to diminish potential outcomes before spiritual formation even begins for a semester. The childcare issue is a major roadblock due to changing agreements between CYS and the Garrison Chaplain's Office, volunteer requirements, and chapel funds. What I have seen work well over the course of my career is contracting with CYS for three-hour blocks of time in order to cover

religious education and worship services. At Fort Knox and Fort Benning, senior pastors working the Garrison Chaplain's Office crafted relationships and deals with CYS to cover longer periods of time on Sunday morning. This led to those chapel services' ability to have spiritual formation and worship at the same time. These successful models would benefit every chapel service if implemented strategically and if every Army chapel service were to host various formation classes, it would move religious programs toward greater post-wide spiritual influence and engagement. Worship is often seen as the overflow of spiritual formation and growth. The Army needs soldiers and their families to experience spiritual growth in order to make them ready for every likely contingency. As the Army looks to improve soldier readiness, it must seriously consider better partnerships with civilian churches and ministries through spiritual formation. This must be done in a way that recognizes people's theological perspectives and the groups who work well together.

Recommendation 2

The second recommendation I posit is that senior chaplain leaders should intentionally recruit more Army unit chaplains and civilian lay volunteers to lead spiritual formation classes within the chapel services and programs, increasing clergy and lay participation. This effectively links Army chapels to Army units seamlessly as UMTs encourage their unit members to grow in chapel programs, which, in turn, will build spiritual vibrancy in military communities. Currently, every unit chaplain is required to support a chapel service on the weekends. The reality is that with only a handful of worship services and over 80 chaplains, many unit chaplains

do not end up participating heavily in preaching or pastoring congregations. Each senior pastor for chapel services decides which unit chaplains will preach and how often. If a chapel service has only worship and occasional fellowship events, like bowling or picnics, and relies on other garrison programs to support its congregants, it is likely some unit chaplains will have little role in the chapel service. It is dependent upon the unit chaplain to pursue opportunities wherever they are located even if it means supply preaching at other chapels when lead pastors are out. This hit or miss approach to unit chaplain utilization within Army chapels is fixable. Again, and I cannot stress this enough, a quick way to employ more unit chaplains attending chapel services is to recruit them for spiritual formation classes. Giving them a platform to invite unit members and neighbors is ministry gold. Inviting neighbors and unit members to a service a unit chaplain does not particularly have a role in is less compelling than inviting them to something in which they actively participate. Personal invitation is an effective method of recruitment within the chapel system that chaplains will be more committed to if they are already heavily involved in the ministry. Inevitably, invitees ask what a unit chaplain's role is in the chapel service. If every service had anywhere from four to 15 chaplains gainfully employed in spiritual formation out of their conviction and religious context (that fit well with chapel's focus), it would lead to unit chaplains inviting more unit members and neighbors, which would build a better bridge between the installation and tenant units as well as its active servicemembers.

One of the unfortunate aspects of unit ministry is much of it happens during the work week, except on special occasions, during crisis and when there are emergencies. Due to the ministry load occurring Monday through Friday, unit chaplains may find themselves without ministry responsibilities on the weekends. Some may enjoy this reprieve, but a significant amount would prefer gainful ministry employment on the weekends. This is anecdotal evidence

in the countless supervisory discussions I have had with subordinate chaplains. They indicate that preaching once a quarter or several times a year is woefully under-utilizing their call and desire to minister. Some have left for civilian pastorates so they can preach and teach more. This problem could be remediated simply by expanding the ministry program of the chapel on Sundays to an additional hour or hour and a half of spiritual formation. The goal would be to have every unit chaplain in garrison leading a spiritual formation class. Ideally, in this paradigm, each unit chaplain would lead formation from solidly convictional frameworks, meaning that they are teaching their doctrine and faith practice. Chaplains are in theory credentialed through the Army's accessions board process and through their respective denominational vetting process to teach faith practice and doctrine. The Army's accession board guided by Army's accession regulations determines if chaplains are fully professionally qualified clergy. They are fully qualified through their professional endorsement instead of into some generic religious professionalism. Knowing this, clergy are less enthused about teaching generalized materials to placate a wider audience. The installation, in this construct, can afford to provide more specification since there would be more chaplains engaging in ministry.

There can be more done to involve unit chaplains in the Army chapel programs. Unemployed chaplains and their families can become merely congregants and numbers instead of serving ministers and volunteers. The net gain is that normally chapel services are filled with chaplain families. These family systems are filled with talented volunteers and program coordinators just waiting to fill significant roles. For as many of these family systems that are serving, there are as many who do not have as pronounced a role. This is a place for growth, but it must be engineered into chapel services in a better way to see better improvement. Ultimately, however, this is not the goal of the Army chapel, to solely minister to other Army chaplains and

their families. The stated goal is to minister to soldiers and their families in order to help strengthen spiritual readiness. Employing more unit chaplains in constructive ways is relatively easy to plan and execute but requires senior chapel pastors to be willing to give up some control of content for the sake of accommodating more soldiers, families, and unit chaplain needs. While many will say this is already happening, it is not happening in terms of unit chaplains solely teaching spiritual formation distinctly out of their tradition through the Army chapel program.

Recommendation 3

The third major recommendation I want to advance is for the development of spiritual formation classes and groups based on like faith and practice. I would like to see more allowance in denominational formation without interference by Army chaplains and lay leaders and to invite more local churches to support Army chapel programs' worship and formation times to benefit spiritual readiness.

Additional Recommendations

In terms of secondary recommendations, I have three additional recommendations to consider. Firstly, I recommend that senior leaders approve starting more new worship services for groups based on doctrinal and theological convictions. The purpose of this is to group

together more effectively those who practice specific beliefs. I believe too many compromises will lead Army families to leave or not seriously consider chapel attendance at all. This action can truly lead to greater spiritual activity, leading to more positive outcomes on military installations. Local church communities of like faith and practice would support those chapel services as current Latter-Day Saints, Catholics, and Islamic faith communities support them today. Local Protestant church groups would be more likely to send support from their churches to chapels as well if they were invited to do so.

Secondly, I recommend that beginning every September and January, spiritual formation classes should coincide with permanent change of station (PCS) cycles. Starting new formation strategically at the end of PCS seasons will allow better interest and commitment of people into those classes. Currently, this model works very well with Protestant Women of the Chapel (PWOC), which typically holds two class seasons, in fall and spring. The reset periods naturally support move season on Army installations and allows time for recruiting new leaders and teachers before instruction begins. Typically, local church small and cell group models utilize this calendar schedule as well to great effect.

Thirdly, I believe the Garrison Chaplain's Office, in conjunction with the Army Chaplain Corps leadership, should work to improve and expedite volunteer processes and background checks to increase volunteers and lay support. Background checks for volunteers is currently managed through an office in San Antonio. This initiative involves changes to standing Army regulations, which requires Army Chaplain Corps leaders working with Army leaders to craft a more cogent plan for onboarding volunteers, without increasing congregant risk levels, where it does not hinder religious activity or put too much burden on legal coverage. Currently, the volunteer process for chapels is, in my opinion, stunting religious activity. It requires countless

forms and fingerprints which delay religious support. I personally conducted background checks to coach youth soccer only to discover that the background check did not certify me, a unit chaplain, to serve in the youth class for chapel.

Outcomes

In terms of future outcomes for practitioners who may desire to implement these paradigms into their future ministries, I believe much depends on the state of the policies and procedures of the Army and the Army Chaplaincy's Strategic Religious Support Plan. If the Army remains in peacetime Army status, the outcomes are different and possibly more positive. But, if the Army moves into a war footing as it has done periodically, depending on the Nation's foreign and domestic agenda, the outcomes change as priorities morph to meet the Army's current mission set. Arguably, the best environment to implement this type of new paradigm is during peacetime. This is because soldiers and families are more stable, and schedules are more predictable. The goal of every chaplain is to help these men, women, and families be spiritually ready to face whatever hardships may come whenever they come, and I believe I have set out a very specific pathway to help the Army chapel system more fully realize a way to do this for the benefit of everyone associated with Army chapel life.

APPENDIX A

SPIRITUAL FORMATION SCHEDULE

Five W's:

When: Sunday mornings at 0930 a.m. and also Thursday at 1130. Companion sermon at 11:00.

Where: Moffett Field Chapel

What: Spiritual Formation / "Living the Christian Life Shaped by Deep Convictions."

Why: To grow deeper convictions and beliefs from Scriptural Study in order to rightly apply those convictions and beliefs to the world we live in.

How: Advertise through Chapel Services, Facebook and print media around location.

Spiritual Formation Schedule:

Week 1: 15 & 18 AUG 19 // Why Study This Way? Convictions, Beliefs, Theology, Doctrine, Overview

Week 2: 18 AUG 19 // God the Father: What are His Attributes, Qualities?

Week 3: 25 AUG 19 // Jesus Christ: Who is He, who is He not?

Week 4: 1 SEPT 19 // Holy Spirit: Labor Day Weekend, No Class

Week 5: 8 SEPT 19 // The Bible:

Week 6: 15 SEPT 19 // Salvation

Week 7: 22 SEPT 19 // Believers Baptism and Next Steps/ Discipleship)

Week 8: 29 SEPT 19 // Lord's Supper- conduct Lord's Supper

Week 9: 6 OCT 19 // Priesthood of Believers

Week 10: 13 OCT 19 // Thanksgiving Holiday Weekend- NO CLASS

Week 11: 20 OCT 19 // The Flesh, the World and the Devil

Week 12: 27 OCT 19 // The Church on Mission

Week 13: 3 NOV 19 // Last Sermon Sunday- Conclusion, Conduct Surveys, Formation Group Social

The Spiritual Formation Class will engage various chapters from Herschel Hobbes' short booklet, "What Baptists Believe," other Baptist works and Holy Scripture. Each week will involve spiritual formation class and sermon on the same topic. It will engage theological, Christological, practical and sociological impact of each topic to the Church and its body.

APPENDIX B

SPIRITUAL FORMATION OUTLINES (WEEKS 1-12)

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

WEEK 1: Deep Convictions and Confessions of Faith

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

Are having deep convictions about God and his creative plan and purpose important for believers?

Do you think having a strong conviction for the things of God to be a detriment to your personal life?

From where do you take your beliefs about your faith convictions?

In what circumstances would you suspend your faith convictions?

Did it work out or not?

PROBLEM: Christians are asked to put aside deep convictions in the Christian life and make way for other cultural and societal priorities. These faith convictions/ deep convictions involve what we believe about God, His Son and how the church is supposed to respond and act towards Him, the church and the world.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Confessional Statements/ Personal Statements

"That they constitute a consensus of opinion of some {church body} large and small, for the general instruction and guidance of our own people and others concerning those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely held among us." They are not intended to add anything to the simple conditions of salvation revealed in the New Testament, viz., repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord." (1925 confession from a church body).

INITIAL REACTIONS TO PROBLEM:

Ask participants for initial reactions to this problem.
Allow five to seven minutes to react to the problem.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

- **READ // Romans 12:1-2 //** "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." (Transformative Convictions Based on God's Word).

- **READ // John 17:16** // *Jesus' Prayer for His Disciples* "They are not of the world, even I as I am not of the world. (John 17:16)

- **READ // Acts 17:11** // *The Bereans searched the Scriptures daily to know whether what Paul was saying was true.*

- **READ // Titus 1:9 //** "He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it."

- **READ // Matthew 6:47-49 //** *Biblical Parable*

REACTIONS TO SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES:

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

Theological-Christological-Practical-Sociological (TCPS) Problem-Solution Strategy:

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Step 1: Theological Implications- considerations are?
Step 2: Christological Implications- where does this intersect with Christ?
Step 3: Practical Implications- if we practice deep convictions what does this mean?
Step 4: Sociological Implications- what does this mean for society

CONCLUSION: Spend final five or ten minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end. Why is living the Christian life shaped by deep conviction so important for believers. What is at stake?

CLOSING THOUGHTS:

A) *Sliding Away/ My Experience*

B) *Church's Cultural Slide Away from Deep Convictions and Confessions of Faith to Marketing Strategies*. Bill Hybels, Willow Creek Church, avg. attendance 24,000, suburbs of Chicago. Creator of Global Leadership Summit. 2007 Article "Willow Creek Rethinks How To Do Church."

Week 2: God the Father, What are His Attributes, Qualities, Characteristics

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

What do you know about God the Father? What is He like?

What is God not like that the world says He is or other religions say that He is?

Is God male or female?

What is a major difference between God and man?

What is the relationship like between God and His Creation?

Do we have to prove the existence of God for God to exist? Does the bible prove God or something else?

PROBLEM: God is different things to different people but shouldn't be. Some see God as female. Why is that wrong? Some see God as uninterested in human affairs. Some see God as non-existent. Some see God as a mental help for life in the real world. Some see that God must be proven in order to be believed. Understanding God more thoroughly will help believers understand more deeply the mysterious of God's plan and purposes.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: One scholar gives us a definition of God as Father:

"*God is the supreme personal Spirit; perfect in all his attributes; who is the source, support, and end of the universe; who guides it according to the wise, righteous, and loving, purpose revealed in Jesus Christ; who indwells in all things by his Holy Spirit, seeking ever to transform them according to his own will and bring them to the goal of his kingdom."* E.Y. Mullins.

Initial Reactions to Problem:

Ask participants for initial reactions to this problem. Allow five to seven minutes to react to the problem.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Genesis 1** *"In beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "Then God said 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness…"* **What does this tell us about God?**

- **READ // Deuteronomy 6:4**

- **READ // Exodus 14:13-30** *"When Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses."* **What is this an example of?**

- **READ // Psalm 103** *"forget not his benefits"* **Name his benefits from the passage**

- **READ // Psalm 63:5-13 // Isaiah 6 // Isaiah 30:18** *"the Lord longs to be gracious to you."*

- **READ // 1 Corinthians 15:24-28**
- **READ** // **John 14:25-26** // Matt. 3:16-17/ key trinitarian passages "God in three manifestations"
  What is a manifestation?

Reactions to Scripture Passages:

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm Practical implications of God's character, attributes and qualities
Brainstorm Sociological implications of God's character, attributes and qualities

Spend final five or ten minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end. Why is living God's character, qualities, and moral attributes important to know and believe wholeheartedly?

Further Implications of God's Person

Seven Natural Characteristics Relating to God's Person

1) **Self-existence**- from no source outside himself
2) **Immutability**- unchanging character, nature and purpose
3) **Omnipresence**- present in all space and time
4) **Immensity**- not confined to space or laws
5) **Eternity**- past, present, and future equally known to him; he inhabits simultaneously
6) **Omnipotence**- unlimited power in keeping with his nature, character, and purpose
    a. Can God make a rock so big He can't even move it?
    b. Pick one of these natural characteristics of God and tell us practically why this is important.

God's Moral Attributes

1) **Holiness**- supreme moral excellence or the sum of his other moral qualities
2) **Righteousness**- self-affirmation of the right as opposed to the wrong
3) **Truth**- source and ground of all forms of knowing, and all objects of knowledge

4) **Love**- self-imparting nature of God seeking the highest good and complete possession of his creatures

Question: If the world had other "always existed beings" who constantly changed, were only sometimes available, stuck in traffic, forgetting what you did last year, lacking in ability to change anything, immoral, unrighteous, false and unloving- would you follow that being?

What about God is holding you back from going deeper in faith and relationship that with a better understanding of Him make a difference?

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 3: Jesus, The Son of God

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

Who is Jesus to you? // begotten not created? Incarnate god-man?

Some religions like Jesus a lot, but they make some big distinctions in their affinity toward Jesus, what are those distinctions?

Did Jesus perform all of those miracles that the Bible says that he did?

**How did He come into the world?*

**What was the point of Jesus?*

**Can you follow Jesus if you don't believe He is God?*

Do we have to prove the existence of God for God to exist? Does the bible prove God or something else?

PROBLEM: Jesus was not just a man who was just really better morally than other people, but still just human. He wasn't just the best man ever to walk on this earth. He was more than just a man. People believe Jesus was a historical figure, outside sources prove it (Josephus, Roman Historian), but it is so much bigger than that. Orthodox faith and belief about Jesus is wonderfully described in several creedal documents:

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Nicaean Creed 325 A.D.
Initial Reactions to Problem:

"we believe…in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father as only begotten, that is, from the essence (reality) of the Father, God from God, Light

from Light, true God from true God, begotten not created, of the same essence as the Father, through whom all things came into being, both in heaven and in earth; Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, becoming human. He suffered and the third day he rose, and ascended into the heavens. And he will come to judge both the living and the dead."
Nicaean Creed
Ask participants for initial reactions to this problem. Allow five to seven minutes to react to the problem.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Genesis 1** *"In beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "Then God said 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness…"* **What does this tell us about God?**

- **READ // John 1:1-14; v. 18** "In the beginning was the Word"
  v. 18- "No one has seen God the Father at any time; the only begotten God (the Son of God, the Word) who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

- **READ // John 3:16-21 "**God sent His Son"

- **READ // Romans 5:1-11**

- **READ // Colossians 1:13-20 //** Through Him all things

- **READ // Colossians 2:8-10** All Fullness of Deity Dwells

- **READ** // **Revelation 11:15** "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ!"

Reactions to Scripture Passages:

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any Christological roadblocks for Christians. What are they?
Brainstorm Sociological miscalculations on Jesus. What are some? Why do they do lots of harm?

Spend final five or ten minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about Jesus

7) Born of a Virgin

8) Fully-God, Fully Man- God in Human form as the Son, only begotten
9) The Messiah, the Christ
10) Without Sin
11) Purpose- Redemption for Man/ "Son of Man"- Jesus identifying with man and its redemption/ used 87 times in NT by Jesus
12) Rose from the Dead- conquered death, power of God as supreme being
13) Rightful Heir of David's throne/ House of Judah
14) Suffering Servant- He identifies with our sufferings and trials; he experienced it all unto death.
15) Vicarious Death- substitution; he died for you to live.
16) Mediator- intercession before the Father on our behalf
17) Ascension into Heaven
18) 2nd Coming of Christ in Glory

Question: The Son of God, the Christ, Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten has been a part of this world since the beginning. He has always existed and been a coequal part of God's deity and part of the trinity of God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He is the person of God who identifies with man best. It is intended to be that way. From glorious created beginning as man enters the created stage to glorious end when man sees the glorified Son come to rule and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, it has been God's plan that the Son play a prominent role. Why? We struggle to grasp the greatest and magnitude of God, but we are better at understanding someone who walked in our own shoes. Jesus Christ walked in our shoes and showed us the way to God. The roadmap to God is found in Jesus Christ.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 4: The Holy Spirit

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

Is the Holy Spirit relevant today?

Can you see the H.S.? Is He a person, a ghost, a figment of our imagination? Is He a spiritual power?

Is the Holy Spirit something that you are comfortable talking to others about? Why or why not?

Do you think this topic would be weird for non-Christians?

PROBLEM: The Holy Spirit is vital part of God the Father and Jesus the Son's provision for the church under the new covenant. The Holy Spirit plays an integral part in the regeneration of the soul during conversion, where the old man is buried and the new man is created, symbolized in baptism, but starting at salvation. The power of the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead. It

will lift us out of final death into newness of life never to spiritual die again. The Holy Spirit does this. He helps the church,

oftentimes neglected as a topic of conversation or neglected when discussing the Christian life. We discuss the Christian life as though the Holy Spirit does not play a pivotal role in the Christian's growth, sustainment and power. The reasons usually has to do with we don't know what we are looking for. Since He is immaterial-spiritual, we have a hard time with it.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: RC Sproul quote

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Acts 2**
- **READ // John 14:16-25**
- **READ // John 16**
- **READ // John 4**
- **READ // Ephesians 1**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any Sociological roadblocks to the Holy Spirit

Spend final five or ten minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about the Holy Spirit

19) A Person
20) A Helper or Advocate
21) Sent from the Father and Son
22) Has Same power that raise Christ from the dead
23) Teaches Christians the Truth
24) Reminds Christians of Jesus' words
25) Intercedes for Us
26) Lives/ Abides in Us
27) Fills hole left by Jesus' ascension so believers not without power

28) Helps interpret Scripture
29) Hands of spiritual gifts
30) Convicts of sin

Question: Why do we leave out the Holy Spirit out of our conversations oftentimes when he does so much for Christians? We have to reinstate the Holy Spirit's place in the life of the believer. We cannot even understand Scripture or make head's or tails of it without His help. We pick wrongly without His help. What's the hold up?

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 5: The Bible

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

Is it okay to question the Bible's authority on an issue?

What gives you confidence that the Bible is true and accurate?

Do you have to read God's Word to have a flourishing Christian life?

Is any part of God's Word more authoritative than any other parts?

Why is God's Word revered by so many Christians also viewed with so great a skepticism today?

PROBLEM: The Word of God is highly respected in our culture. It is also widely viewed with skepticism. We settle for an understanding of the Bible that looks like consumer consumption. We would rather eat the Word of God in little morsels that someone else has provided to us. We settle for basic moralistic truths.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: Martin Luther's Apple Picking

"Martin Luther said, "I study my Bible as I gather apples. First, I shake the whole tree that the ripest might fall. Then I shake each limb, and when I have shaken each limb, I shake each branch and every twig. Then I look under every leaf." "I search the Bible as a whole like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb- study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters when they do not break the sense. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings."

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // 2 Timothy 3:14**
- **READ // Psalm 119- longest chapter in the Bible; right in the middle**
- **READ // Jeremiah 29:11**
- **READ // Habakkuk 1:5**
- **READ // Ephesians 1**
- **READ // Hebrews 4: 12**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any Sociological benefits of God's Word

1) Charitable?
2) Good stewardship?
3) Disciplined society?
4) More law-abiding society?

Spend final five or ten minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about God's Word, The Bible, the Word of God

31) Inspired by God
32) Living and Active
33) A Holdfast- a strong tower, anchor, rooting
34) Profitable for Teaching, Reproof, Correction, Training in Righteousness
35) In order to equip men for every good work
36) Confidence in Decisions
37) Able to Judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart

Question: How do we make God's word more important in our worship and Christian living?

_____

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 6: Salvation

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

Have you ever been saved by someone or something, not spiritually but physically?

Is there more than one path to Salvation?

Can you be certain of your Salvation?

What are the different thoughts about how one comes to Salvation?

PROBLEM: Man has a problem. The problem is sin. We are all born into sin which means we cannot be reunited with God in eternity without our sin debt being paid. We need a remedy. We need to be saved from our doomed estate. The good news and the bad news is that God gave humans free will agency to make decisions in life (Adam and Eve). One of the freewill agency decisions we desires for us to make is to trust God for salvation of our soul. We see people pursing other ways than God's salvation.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: H.A Ironside's street preaching experience

"While presenting the Gospel on the street of a California city, (H.A. Ironside, Moody Bible Church) we were often interrupted about as follows: "Look here, sir! There are hundreds of religions in this country, and the followers of each sect think theirs the only right one. How can poor plain men like us find out what really is the truth?" We generally replied something like this: "Hundreds of religions, you say? That's strange; I've heard of only two. Oh, but you surely know there are more than that?"

"Not at all, sir. I find, I admit, many shades of difference in the opinions of those compromising the two great schools; but after all there are but two. The one covers all who expect salvation by doing; the other, all who have been saved by something done. So you see the whole question is very simple. Can you save yourself, or must you be saved by another? If you can be your own savior, you do not need my message. If you cannot, you may well listen to it." H.A. Ironside

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Revelation 7:9-10**
- **READ // John 3:3, 14-21**
- **READ // Ephesians 2:8-10**
- **READ // Romans 10:5-14**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any Christological connections to Salvation:

5) Unblemished Lamb/ Day of Atonement- one sacrifice to cover sins of people of Israel.
6) Propitiation- sacrifice appeasing God's wrath
7) Vicarious Death of Christ- died on behalf of us
8) Adoption- in our salvation we are reborn anew from above and adopted as sons and daughters of God with all the rights and privileges
9) Rebirth- spiritual rebirth brought upon by the Holy Spirit

Spend final five or ten minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about Salvation

38) Salvation belongs to God in Provision of Jesus Christ
39) Universalistic Call to Repentance/ Not all will
40) Faith comes by hearing the Word
41) Free Grace Gift
42) Salvation means saving someone from death and destruction
43) Salvation comes through belief/faith in Jesus' person and work on our behalf
44) There are no other strings attached to God's Salvation in Jesus Christ.

Question: What does a Salvation that you don't work for mean to the world?

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 7: Baptism and Discipleship

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

What is the difference between Jesus as "Savior" and as "Lord?"

When is baptism appropriate for a disciple of Christ?

Why is baptism important for followers of Jesus Christ in discipleship?

What is significant about baptism in discipleship?

PROBLEM: We believe in Jesus for Salvation, we are saved and many Christians stop right there. Jesus tells the parable of the good soil and the bad soils. Some seeds fell in bad soil. These seeds did not lead to a flourishing plant which bore fruit. Faith and repentance are the beginning of the Christian's journey we have studied, but there must be growth and future obedience.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: Baptism is an open public act to an inward reality in the life of the believer. It is not an outward act leading to an inward reality. People can get dipped into the water and come up the same as they had prior to going under the water. There is nothing magical about the water or the ritual. It is a worshipful ordinance, but not a magical ritual.

People would get baptized during Christian persecution days in the Roman Empire just to be able to get into the church to spy on the Christians. Those spies were baptized illegitimately by unknowing Christian leaders because the initiate said all the right words, but did not have an inward spiritual change. It was fake. Baptism can be done falsely or without warrant. It should never be done without a strong Christian witness of Christ's salvation in the life of the believer.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Matthew 13- (Soils Parable)**
- **READ // Luke 3:21-21 (Jesus' Baptism)**
- **READ // Acts 8- (Philip and Eunuch)**
- **READ // Matthew 28:18-20 (Great Commission, Trinity, Baptism)**

- **READ // Romans 6:1-7 (Buried with Christ in Baptism)**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any Sociological connections to Baptism and Discipleship:

-Public Profession and Church Identifier

Spend final five- or ten-minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about Salvation

1) Ordinance- something commanded by Jesus that we do
2) Requires authentic faith conversion in Christ
3) Requirement for taking Lord's Supper
4) Full Water Immersion
5) Symbolic of Christ's saving work
6) Symbolic of dying to the old self
7) Symbolic of surviving the flood waters of extinction and being reborn
8) Identifies supplicant with church body
9) Public act of obedience and worship

Closing Question: *Why is believer's baptism important if faith in Christ saves us?*

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 8: Lord's Supper

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

What does it mean to take the Lord's Supper "unworthily?"

What are the elements and what is their spiritual significance?

How often should we take the Lord's Supper?

Did it look differently in the early New Testament church? If so, how?

PROBLEM: There are ten different ways to partake in the Lord's supper or communion and at least four different ways to interpret it- elements turn into Jesus' body and blood (transubstantiation), the presence of Jesus is somehow in the elements (under, through) of bread and grape juice. Transubstantiation changes bread and grape juice into Jesus' blood and body, which we eat. Zwingli taught the memorial view, that sees the Lord's supper as symbolic of Christ's acts for us. Calvin postulated another view which said Christ's physical presence is not in the act of the Lord's supper, but his real presence is, which means, his divine nature shows up in this ordinance and only in this one. Everything else is a derivative of the Holy Spirit's work. The problem here is: can the glorified Jesus be in two places at once or separate his physical presence from his real spiritual presence. Certainly, onlookers would have had a problem with this perceived cannibalistic style mysticism. We have probably seen or experienced several versions in our lifetime. There are questions about whether there is something in the elements or whether it is just symbolic. Some people believe without its presence in the worship service something very significant is missing.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: Baptism is an open public act to an inward reality in the life of the believer. It is not an outward act leading to an inward reality. People can get dipped into the water and come up the same as they had prior to going under the water. There is nothing magical about the water or the ritual. It is a worshipful ordinance, but not a magical ritual.

People would get baptized during Christian persecution days in the Roman Empire just to be able to get into the church to spy on the Christians. Those spies were baptized illegitimately by unknowing Christian leaders because the initiate said all the right words, but did not have an inward spiritual change. It was fake. Baptism can be done falsely or without warrant. It should never be done without a strong Christian witness of Christ's salvation in the life of the believer.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-23, John 13- "Take, eat, this is My body."**
- **READ // 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 "…in remembrance of me."**
- **READ // 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 "Cup of Demons, Cup of the Lord"**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any Christological points in the Lord's supper:

Spend final five- or ten-minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about the Lord's Supper

10) It corresponds with feast of the Passover (bitter herbs, unblemished lamb, unleavened bread, tunic and sandals on).
11) It is a command given by Jesus to the Disciples and continued in the early church
12) It is only for baptized believers.
13) The communion is between God and man next to other men, women and young people. God ultimately sanctions this communion based upon faith, more so than churches stamping off on it for people.
14) It is spiritual, worshipful, memorial, faith building and sustaining
15) It can be taken in an unworthy manner; causes spiritual introspection and spiritual house cleaning. Judas partook in an under worthy manner (the Judas clause).
16) The elements are: wine/grape juice and unleavened bread/ bread
17) Bread represents Jesus' broken body which suffered great harm, injury and pain to bring about our salvation.
18) Fruit of the vine (grape juice/wine) represents Jesus' blood shed for our forgiveness, which blood accomplishes.
19) Church members conduct with worshipful act together in good order and discipline until He comes again.
20) Public act of obedience and worship
21) Jesus says he will not eat it again until Heaven with us (together)

Closing Question: *How do you see the Lord's suppers importance in your worship life to God?*

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 9: Priesthood of Believers

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

Is there a need for a priestly role anymore? Why? Why not?

How was Jesus all of these things (Prophet, Priest and King)?

Do you see a difference between clergy and laity as it relates to God's call upon men and women's lives?

Do you ever feel inadequate to discern God's truth?

What unities all people within the body of Christ together beyond saving grace?

PROBLEM: It has been said, 20% of people in the church do 80% of the work of the church every given Sunday. The 80% that don't do anything expect vocational ministers to cover everything the engaged laity cannot do or does not want to do. Why is this you might ask?

-"Never Been Asked"
-"Ecclesiological View" (Subliminally held)
-"Not Called to That Task"
-"Never thought about it before"
-"Don't think its my job"
-"For trained professionals"
-"

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: More than these basic excuses we hear a lot and maybe have given ourselves recently even, I would argue its deeper than this. Did Christ come to make us all royal priests of Christ or come that only a few would ever experience the amazingness of serving Christ's kingdom?

For over a thousand years, there was a very distinct line of demarcation between clergy and laity and neither the two shall pass. I said there was a very distinct line up until that point we are led to believe in history books, but there has always been a laity movement within the larger contexts of churches and denominations. God smashes the religious clergy predominance with the coming of Jesus Christ. He uses simple men and women to carry his message forward. Jesus Christ is our High Priest, but He is also our sacrifice for our sins. He has commissioned to His cause and glory.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Revelation 1:4-7; 5:10; 20:6 "Present (priest-like) and Future (heavenly priests) role"**
- **READ // 1 Timothy 2:1-8 "One Mediator"**
- **READ // 1 Peter 2:4-12 "Royal Priesthood" "Holy Nation"**
- **READ // Matthew 21:43-45 "Nation of Israel Loses Role"**

- **READ // 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 and 6:1-10 "Ministry of Reconciliation"**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any Christological points in the priesthood of believers:

Spend final five- or ten-minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about the Priesthood of Believers

-Jesus is our high priest
-priestly role taken from nation of Israel; abolished
-heavenly role will be as priests
-earthly role is priest-like (in the likeness of Christ's work being imitators of Christ) in our support of the ministry of reconciliation between God and man through Jesus Christ.
-The Apostle Peter calls the church spiritual stones building up a spiritual house; a royal priesthood.
-The Holy Spirit provides seal and safety net for these tasks.
-The Church watches over everyone and ensures ministry of reconciliation is properly being administered to the community.
-There is only one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. We are to direct people to this once for all sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf.
-Every believer can enter His presence with no mediator besides Christ (Hobbes)

Closing Question: *What happens when everyone under Christ's banner sees their life as priestly in its efforts to see people reconciled to God through Jesus Christ?*

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 10: The World, The Flesh and The Adversary

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

Do you believe there is an evil being trying to subvert the world to its plans? If so, what do you call it?

Is the world getting better or is it getting worse? Why?

What has made you realize that our flesh is weak as Paul describes and prone to subversion?

Are you strong enough to resist "the Adversary?" Should you be scare, frightened or superstitious of him?

How does the Adversary operate? Why is this important?

PROBLEM: "The Adversary" is seen as this caricature from Halloween or a scary movie, but it is worst than that unfortunately because our flesh lets us down daily. We have a flesh problem. We are prone to wander, prone to leave the God we love for other delights and things pleasing to the eye. This means we are susceptible to corruptive/corrosive influences if there is a force strong enough to wield dark power to subvert our affections away from God. The Adversary is our opponent because of our flesh and the influences of the world, which is a devil's playground.

-

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: Beware of Evil Fleshly Desires Championed by the World on behalf of the Adversary

"There is the story of a lady who never spoke ill of anybody. "I believe you would say something good even about the devil." A friend told her. "Well," she said, "you certainly do have to admire his persistence.""

<u>SCRIPTURE READINGS</u>

- **READ // 1 Peter 5:8-11 "roaring lion" "devourer"**
- **READ // Matthew 10:28 "fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."**
- **READ // Romans 7:14-25 "wretched man that I am"**
- **READ // James 1:12-18 "blessed is the man who perseveres under trial"**
- **READ // 2 Thessalonians 2:5-10 "deluding influence to make the world believe what is false"**

- **READ // Revelation 20:7-10 "the Adversaries Demise"**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any sociological implications of the World, the flesh and the Adversary:

Spend final five- or ten-minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about the World, the Flesh and the Adversary:

-Cast down from Heaven
-Satan means "adversary"
-Powerful evil force allowed to roam the earth distorting God's truth
-Defeated on the cross and through the resurrection
-World intoxicated and can not be trusted to convey truth
-Flesh corrupted
-Has no power outside of what God has given him
-Should be not be taken lightly, but not feared
-He can't destroy body and soul, only body if allowed to by God
-Can not be everywhere at the same time. Must pick and choose his location
-Distorts God's truth at every turn
-Tempts God's people with vanity fair
-Tries to steal God's glory for himself; his worship
-Flesh incapable of success without Spirit's guiding hand
-Masquerades as something other than he is; cloaked in deception
-The world is deceived easily by the Adversary
-Will be thrown into the lake of fire to suffer torment forever

Closing Question: *Let's pray.*

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Week 11: Missions and Evangelism

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

What is missions?

What is evangelism?

Have you ever been on a missions trip overseas? Tell us about it (briefly)

Why is human agency an important part of missions/evangelism?

What is the hardest part about missions/evangelism for you?

PROBLEM: There is a world that does not know who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for the world. We sometimes make the mistake of believing everyone has heard about Jesus and is familiar with His teachings. We often believe missions is what missionaries do who live in other parts of the world learning languages, translating the bible and living in grass huts. We forget that mission work happens locally as well right around us. Many would say we live in a post-Christian context where it is not a given that someone has been to church or knows about Jesus Christ. We mistakenly believe that missions/evangelism does not involve us because we live here and already know Him. There is always human agency involved in missions and evangelism even though God does not have to do it.

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: Pastor Mac Brunson remarks:

"It is worth noting that no one in the New Testament ever came to Jesus Christ apart from human agency. Consider the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26-38."

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // Matthew 28:18-20 "Great Commission"**
- **READ // Ephesians 3:1-11 "Revealed Mysteries"**
- **READ // Acts 1:7-8 "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria…"**
- **READ // Philippians 1:12-20 "the cause of Christ has become well known"**
- **READ // Acts 17:22-33 "Missions Contextualization"**
- **READ // Luke 10 "Sending out of the seventy"**

Allow ten to fifteen minutes of reaction time related to passages of Scripture that touch on problem-set

TCPS Problem-Solution Strategy (Group):

Brainstorm any theological implications of the missions/evangelism

Spend final five- or ten-minutes recap the major points, discuss next week and end.

Important Truths about Missions and Evangelism:

-Human agency is always present
-Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and make disciples
-How will they know unless they are told
-It is global, but also local

-Main point- telling people about Jesus Christ so that they can experience true relationship with Him
-Spiritual vibrant congregations are missional/evangelistic
-Churches that do missions/evangelism grow
-Missions involves interpreting other cultures' beliefs against the gospel message
-Make Disciples
-Go (local, regional, global)
-Results depend on God
-To be sent out
-1st missionary journey happened from Antioch

Closing Question: *Let's pray.*

SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND BIBLE STUDY

"LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SHAPED BY DEEP CONVICTIONS"

Study Topic: Truth: What is it?

OPENING QUESTIONS (ICEBREAKER): PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE

What is the problem with the word truth today from your vantage point?

Is living out "my truth" congruent with Scriptural truth?

How can there be only one truth with some many beliefs both cultural and religious across the globe?

Is there a truth for space and a truth for Earth?

Is it possible to steer clear of the accusations of being dogmatic, archaic, arrogant, exclusive when dispensing the truth?

PROBLEM: Sometimes when we tell people the truth, they don't like it. Other times, it is the greatest thing they have never heard before. Many times it is an inconvenient truth that nobody wants to hear b/c it goes against the grain of societal desires. Daniel went against the grain in Babylon and God blessed him tremendously and allowed him to have a voice like no other.

Or, if I believe it then it is true. Never has that held up for very long.

My son tried to tell the truth to someone moralistically but he did it a way that was judgmental most likely, like being scolded for doing something. The reaction that he got back was way worse than he could have anticipated. He realized that deep down inside people can go to a dark

place when confronted with the truth, even if his delivery was ill-placed. People do not like to be confronted with the truth. Why?

Quote: "It's easier to believe a lie that one has heard a thousand times than to believe a fact that no one has heard before." –Grit

Quote: "To fool the world, tell the truth." Bismarck

Quote: "The trouble with stretching the truth is that it's apt to snap back." Saturday Evening Post

OPENING ILLUSTRATION:
Initial Reactions to Problem: Truth from Battle Shock

"General S. L. A. Marshall discovered that men interviewed after battle are in such a state of shock that they can only tell the truth: officially it is called group method. General Marshall says that the average man cannot lie in the presence of comrades who would contradict him if he were telling an untruth; haunted by the memory of the recent dead, he will not lie." Ministers' Research Service

SCRIPTURE READINGS

- **READ // John 18:28-40 "Jesus' discourse with Pilate"**
- **READ // John 14:6 "I am…Truth"**
- **READ // Galatians 2:5 "false brethren do not love the truth" "Judiazers"**
- **READ // Ephesians 4:15 "speaking the truth in love"**
- **READ // John 8:31-32 "truth will make you free"**

Closing Question: *If holding back the truth leads to more human error and folly, what will it take for you to tell the truth in love with Christ as the motivation?*

APPENDIX C

CHAPEL CONGREGANT-SOLDIER SURVEY (SAMPLE)

Military Protestant Chapel Survey

This 41 question survey is completely voluntary. Thank you for your willingness to fill out the survey.

For every survey completed, the survey owner will donate $2 to the "Chapel Tithes and Offerings Fund" for Soldier Ministry.

The sole purpose of this survey is to better understand the religious support needs of chapel participants serving in the military.

(Disclaimer): Your answers will stay anonymous and protected. The survey owner would like to request the use of survey answers to develop statistical and informational analysis for furthering practical research on military Protestant chapel services.

Survey Owner Contact Information: Austin C. Vann
Doctorate of Ministry Candidate austincvann@gmail.com

* Required

1.

1. Survey Consent: "I give my consent to the survey owner for use of my answers for research and analytical use." (Please check "Yes" to continue) * Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes

2.

2. In which age period were you born? * Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 1928-1945 (Silent)
- ◯ 1946-1964 (Boomers)
- ◯ 1965-1980 (Generation X)
- ◯ 1981-1996 (Millenials)
- ◯ 1997- (Generation Z)

3.

3. What is your gender? * Mark only one oval.

- Male
- Female

4.

4. Are you a service member, dependent, or civilian? * Mark only one oval.

- Service Member (Currently Serving Active/Reserve/National Guard)
- Dependent (Spouse, Child, Relative, Parent)
- Civilian (Worker, Retired Servicemember, Community Partner)

5.

5. What is your race/ethnicity? * Mark only one oval.

- Asian
- Black
- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Two or more races
- American Indian/Alaskan Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

6.

6. How many years of military service do/did you have? * Mark only one oval.

- 30 years or more
- 20 to 29 years
- 10 to 19 years
- 5 to 9 years
- 2 to 4 years
- Less than 2 years

No military service

7.

7. What is your faith/denomination background? * Mark only one oval.

- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Presbyterian
- Baptist
- Christian/Non-Denominational
- Anglican/Episcopal
- Church of Christ
- Assembly of God/ Associate Gospel Churches
- Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA)
- Calvary Chapel
- Foursquare
- Pentecostal
- Catholic/Non-practicing My Faith

Group Not Listed

8.

8. Where do your religious faith/denominational beliefs lean? * Mark only one oval.

- Ultra Conservative
- Conservative
- Moderately Conservative
- Moderate
- Moderately Liberal
- Liberal
- Ultra Liberal

Not sure

9.

9. In your time in the military, have you ever attended a Protestant chapel or field service in the military? * Mark only one oval.

- Yes No 10.
- 10. If you have attended a Protestant chapel or field service in the military, how many times? * Mark only one oval.

- Only once
- Less than 10 times
- Regular Attender/ more than 10 times
- Never

11.

Of the Protestant chapel services offered on Army installations, which one would you most likely attend? * Mark only one oval.

- General Protestant/Traditional
- Chapel Next/Contemporary
- Liturgical
- Gospel
- None

12.

12. How well do you think Protestant chapel services are meeting the needs of religious participants (Scale 1 to 10)? * Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Least											Most

13.

13. More specifically, how well do you think chapel service categories (Traditional, Chapel Next, Liturgical, Gospel) are meeting religious preference needs for worship? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Least											Most

14.

14. In your opinion, is there a chapel service (style/form/denomination) missing from the current options offered to chapel participants? If yes, please provide detailed answer with specifics of what is missing.

15.

15. What state do you currently live?

16.

16. Do you feel that your faith/denominational beliefs are sufficiently represented in Protestant chapel services?

17.

17. (Skip the question if not from Baptist Background): as a Baptist do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?

18.

18. (Skip the question if not from Conservative/Evangelical Background): as a Conservative/Evangelical do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?

19.

19. (Skip the question if not from Reformed/Conservative Background): as a Reformed/Conservative do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?

20.

20. (Skip the question if not from Non-denominational-Conservative Background)- as a Non-Denominational-Conservative do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?

21.

21. (Skip the question if not from Baptist background): as a Baptist is there anything you have seen within current Protestant services that does not mesh with your faith/beliefs?

22.

22. (Skip the question if not from Baptist background): as a Baptist have you ever witnessed an infant baptism in the chapel service you were attending? * Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

23.

23. (Skip the question if not from Conservative/Baptist background): as a Conservative/Baptist have you ever listened to a sermon at a chapel service that came from the opposite side of the interpretation spectrum?

24.

24. (Skip the question if not from Baptist background): as a Baptist have you ever had to participate in liturgical religious practices in the chapel service you were attending? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

25.

25. (Skip the question if not from Conservative-Evangelical-Baptist background): as a Conservative-Evangelical-Baptist would you be interested in participating in a chapel service for that large umbrella group?

26.

26. In what branch of service are you currently serving or did you serve at retirement/getting out? *

Mark only one oval.

- Army
- Navy
- Marines
- Air Force
- Cost Guard Space Force

27.

27. As we move deeper into the twenty-first century, what changes should be made to Protestant chapel services to improve them?

28.

28. Considering the First Amendment's right to freedom of religion, do you believe Protestant chapel services are effective in providing military communities with varied enough religious expression to meet population group needs?

29.

29. Considering the First Amendment's right to freedom of religion, have you ever witnessed religious expression that has been prevented in military communities citing already adequate religious coverage within that religious environment?

30.

30. (Skip if not Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical) On a scale from 1 to 10, how likely do you think it is an existing chapel service would partner with you to allow you to start a bible study/small group focused on your specific religious context i.e. Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical? * Mark only one oval.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

31.

31. What religious practices are you used to seeing in local church services that do not happen with the same frequency in chapel services but should? *

32.

32. How long usually does a senior pastor (chaplain) stay in a chapel service? * Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less than one Year	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Five or more

33.

33. How well do you feel military chaplains are able to stay true to their religious tenets and without compromise in Protestant chapel services? * Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Least/Not Very	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Most/Very Much So

34.

34. During Protestant services, do you feel there is a sermon topic that is off limits for chaplains to preach on?

35.

35. (Skip this question if not Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical): Name any essential elements of worship on a regular basis missing from Protestant services?

36.

36. (Skip this question if not Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical): Do you feel that the "General Protestant" umbrella effectively covers your faith convictions? Explain.

37.

37. (Hypothetical Question): If Protestant chapel services provided faith-specific small groups as part of a chapel ministry, would you be likely to attend one if it was focused on your faith tradition i.e. Baptist, etc? * Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No Maybe

38.

38. (Skip unless you said "yes" or "maybe" to the previous question): please provide your justification for wanting to attend a faith specific small group within the broader chapel service context. Why would you want greater faith specification?

39.

39. Do you feel that your chapel has a specific doctrine that they follow? * Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

40.

40. On a scale of 1 - 10, how do you feel your chapel service connects with the doctrine you hold? Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not connected at all											Connects well

41.

If offered by the chapel (by chaplains from the same or similar faith tradition) as a way of strengthening faith convictions, would you be interested in participating in a multi-week small group focused on doctrine and practical application? * Mark only one oval.

- Yes, where do I sign up
- No
- Maybe

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APPENDIX D

SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS (PIVOT CHART)

Question 1: Survey Consent: "I give my consent to the survey owner for use of my answers for research and analytical use." (Please check "Yes" to continue)	
Row Labels	**Number of congregants**
Yes	9
Grand Total	**9**
Question 2. In which age period were you born?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
1928-1945	1
1946-1964	4
1965-1980	1
1981-1996	2
Grand Total	**9**
Question 3. What is your gender?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Female	2
Male	7
Grand Total	**9**
Question 4: Are you a service member, dependent, or civilian?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Civilian	4
Dependent	3
Retired	1
Service member	2
Grand Total	**9**
Question 5: What is your race/ethnicity?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Two or more races	2
Asian	2
Hispanic	1
White	4
Other	0

Grand Total	9

Question 6: How many years of military service do/did you have?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
10 to 19	1
2 to 4	2
20 to 29	1
30 or more	1
5 to 9	1
No military service	3
Grand Total	**9**
Question 7: What is your faith/denomination background?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Baptist	2
Catholic	1
Christian/Non-Denominational	3
My Faith Group Not Listed	1
Presbyterian	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 8: Where do your religious faith/denominational beliefs lean?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Conservative	3
Moderate	2
Moderately Conservative	1
Not sure	2
Ultra Conservative	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 9: In your time in the military, have you ever attended a Protestant chapel or field service in the military? *	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
No	2
Yes	7
Grand Total	**9**
Question 10: If you have attended a Protestant chapel or field service in the military, how many times?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Less than 10 times	2
Only once	1
Regular attender	5
Never	1

Grand Total	**9**
Question 11: Of the Protestant chapel services offered on Army installations, which one would you most likely attend?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Chapel Next/Contemporary	1
General Protestant/Traditional	6
none	2
Grand Total	**9**
Question 12: How well do you think Protestant chapel services are meeting the needs of religious participants (Scale 1 to 10)?	
Row Labels	**Average of Congregants**
Nine Congregants (Avg.)	8.33
Grand Total	**8.33 out of 10**
Question 13: More specifically, how well do you think chapel service categories (Traditional, Chapel Next, Liturgical, Gospel) are meeting religious preference needs for worship?	
Row Labels	**Average of Congregants**
Nine Congregants (Avg.)	8.22
Grand Total	**8.22 out of 10**
Question 14: In your opinion, is there a chapel service (style/form/denomination) missing from the current options offered to chapel participants? If yes, please provide detailed answer with specifics of what is missing.	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
No/Nothing	5
Yes	2
N/A	2
Grand Total	**9**
Question 15: What state do you currently live?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
California	8
Texas	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 16: Do you feel that your faith/denominational beliefs are sufficiently represented in Protestant chapel services?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
N/A	1
Some days	1
Yes	7

Grand Total	**9**
Question 17: (Skip the question if not from Baptist Background): as a Baptist do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
N/A	5
Yes	4
Grand Total	**9**
Question 18: (Skip the question if not from Conservative/Evangelical Background): as a Conservative/Evangelical do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
N/A	6
Yes	3
Grand Total	**9**
Question 19: (Skip the question if not from Reformed/Conservative Background): as a Reformed/Conservative do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
N/A	8
No	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 20: (Skip the question if not from Non-denominational-Conservative Background)- as a Non-Denominational-Conservative do you feel Protestant chapel services are effective in representing your faith/beliefs? Why or why not?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	4
No	1
N/A	4
Grand Total	**9**
Question 21: (Skip the question if not from Baptist background): as a Baptist is there anything you have seen within current Protestant services that does not mesh with your faith/beliefs?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	2
No	1
N/A	6
Grand Total	**9**

Question 22: (Skip the question if not from Baptist background): as a Baptist have you ever witnessed an infant baptism in the chapel service you were attending?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	3
No	2
N/A	4
Grand Total	**9**
Question 23: Skip the question if not from Conservative/Baptist background): as a Conservative/Baptist have you ever listened to a sermon at a chapel service that came from the opposite side of the interpretation spectrum?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
N/A	7
No	1
Yes	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 24: (Skip the question if not from Baptist background): as a Baptist have you ever had to participate in liturgical religious practices in the chapel service you were attending? *	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
N/A	4
No	3
Yes	2
Grand Total	**9**
Question 25: (Skip the question if not from Conservative-Evangelical-Baptist background): as a Conservative-Evangelical-Baptist would you be interested in participating in a chapel service for that large umbrella group?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
N/A	7
No	1
Yes	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 26: In what branch of service are you currently serving or did you serve at retirement/getting out?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Air Force	2
Army	4
Coast Guard	2
None	1
Grand Total	**9**

Question 27: As we move deeper into the twenty-first century, what changes should be made to Protestant chapel services to improve them?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	6
No	3
Grand Total	**9**
Question 28: Considering the First Amendment's right to freedom of religion, do you believe Protestant chapel services are effective in providing military communities with varied enough religious expression to meet population group needs?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	6
No	2
Maybe	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 29: Considering the First Amendment's right to freedom of religion, have you ever witnessed religious expression that has been prevented in military communities citing already adequate religious coverage within that religious environment?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	2
No	6
No Answer	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 30: (Skip if not Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical) On a scale from 1 to 10, how likely do you think it is an existing chapel service would partner with you to allow you to start a bible study/small group focused on your specific religious context i.e. Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical?	
Row Labels	**Average from Congregants**
Nine Congregants (Avg.)	7.833
Grand Total	**7.833 out of 10**
Question 31: What religious practices are you used to seeing in local church services that do not happen with the same frequency in chapel services but should?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	6
No	2
N/A	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 32: How long usually does a senior pastor (chaplain) stay in a chapel service?	

Row labels	Average from Congregants
Number of Years	3.25
Grand Total	**3.25**
Question 33: How well do you feel military chaplains are able to stay true to their religious tenets and without compromise in Protestant chapel services?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Scale from 1-10	9.25
Grand Total	**9.25 out of 10**
Question 34: During Protestant services, do you feel there is a sermon topic that is off limits for chaplains to preach on?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	5
No	3
No answer	1
Grand Total	**9**
Question 35: Skip this question if not Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical): Name any essential elements of worship on a regular basis missing from Protestant services?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	2
No	1
N/A	6
Grand Total	**9**
Question 36: Skip this question if not Baptist/Conservative/Evangelical): Do you feel that the "General Protestant" umbrella effectively covers your faith convictions? Explain.	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	3
N/A	6
Grand Total	**9**
Question 37: (Hypothetical Question): If Protestant chapel services provided faith-specific small groups as part of a chapel ministry, would you be likely to attend one if it was focused on your faith tradition i.e. Baptist, etc?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	3
No	2
Maybe	3
No answer	1
Grand Total	**9**

Question 38: (Skip unless you said "yes" or "maybe" to the previous question): please provide your justification for wanting to attend a faith specific small group within the broader chapel service context. Why would you want greater faith specification?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	4
N/A	3
No Answer	2
Grand Total	**9**
Question 39: Do you feel that your chapel has a specific doctrine that they follow?	
Row Labels	**Number of Congregants**
Yes	2
NO	3
Not Sure	4
Grand Total	**9**
Question 40: On a scale of 1 - 10, how do you feel your chapel service connects with the doctrine you hold?	
Row Labels	**Average from Congregants**
Scale from 1-10	8.5556
Grand total	**8.5566 out of 10**
Question 41: If offered by the chapel (by chaplains from the same or similar faith tradition) as a way of strengthening faith convictions, would you be interested in participating in a multi-week small group focused on doctrine and practical application?	
Row Labels	Number of Congregants
Yes	3
No	1
Maybe	5
Grand Total	9

APPENDIX E

CHAPEL NEXT FORT HOOD'S THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Chapel Next Theological Statement

1. WE BELIEVE that all Scripture is self-attesting, and being Truth requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God—the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments—is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, God spoke through men to declare His words found in Scripture today. The Bible is without error and does not lead to error. Everything necessary for salvation is contained in Scripture.
   Exodus 24:4; Psalm 19:7-9; 119:105, 130; Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 40:6-8; Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:44; John 1:1-28; Acts 1:16; Romans 15:4, 16:25-26; Galatians 1:8-9; Ephesians 2:20; 2 Timothy 3:10-17; Hebrews 1:1-3, 4:12; 1 Peter 1:24-25; 2 Peter 1:16-25.

2. WE BELIEVE in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory, and praise forever! Although distinguished by their personal properties, these three are one God the same in substance equal in power and glory.
   Genesis 1, 17:1; Deuteronomy 4:15-16; 1 Kings 8:27; 6:4; Job 11:7-9, 26:14; Psalm 90:2, 115:3; 139:6, 145:3; Proverbs 16:4 Isaiah 6:3, 45:5-6 Jeremiah 10:10, 23:23-24; Malachi 3:6; Matthew 3:16-17, 6:9; 28:18-20; Luke 24:39; John 1:14, 18, 4:24,15:26; Acts 14:11,15; Romans 11:34, 36, 16:27; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:11, 2:18; Colossians 1:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 1:2-3; James 1:17, Revelation 4:8, 11.

3. WE BELIEVE that the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is fully God became fully man in one Person forever. He lived without sin on our behalf by his humble life, being

obedient in his thoughts, words, and actions. According to the Scriptures, He died on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant.
Genesis 3:15, Matthew 1:18-25, 5:17, 28:18; Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Isaiah 9:6-7, 42:1, 55:4-5; John 1:1,14, 3:13, 10:15-16, 15:13, 15; 1 John 3:16, 5:20; Galatians 4:4; Heb. 2:14, 16-17, 4:15, 5:4-5, 7:22, 9:14,16, 10:5-10, 14, 12:24; Colossians 1:19, 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:5, 3:16; 1 Peter 3:18; Romans 1:3-4, 6:9, 8:34; Acts 2:23-24, 27, 10:38,13:37; Philippians 2:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; Ephesians 1:7-10; Hebrews 9:15-22.

4. WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of our sin and draws us to the Savior, indwelling our hearts. He gives new life to us, empowers us, and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth and seals us for the day of redemption.
Genesis 1:2; Psalm 110:3; Ezekiel 36:27; Joel 2:28; John 4:24, 15:26; Matthew 3:16-17, 11:28, 28:19; John 3:5, 6:37, 44-45; 16:5-15; Acts 13:48, 16:14, 26:18; Romans 6:16-18, 8:2, 11:7, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12; 2 Corinthians 3:3-6, 4:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:3-18, 2:1-10; Philippians 1:29; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 2:9; Revelation 22:17.

5. WE BELIEVE that God created humans, male and female, in His own image; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect. God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman to reflect Christ's love for His church. Due to the original sin of Adam, humankind lost communion with God and sinned with him. Our entire being was corrupted, and we are unable and unwilling to do anything good. We are naturally inclined to do evil. We are utterly unable to remedy our lost condition on our own efforts. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace and received by faith alone.
Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7, 17-3:24, 6:5; Psalm 8:6-8; Ecclesiastes 7:20, 29, 12:7; Jeremiah 17:9; Hosea 14:2-4; Matthew 10:28; Luke 23:43; Romans 2:14-15; 3:10-26; 5:15-16, 8:7-8, 30,

9:1-33; Galatians 3:5-9; Ephesians 1:7, 2:1-10, 4:24, 5; Colossians 3:10.

6. WE BELIEVE that salvation is the gift of God through the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people brought to grace and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whose atoning blood was shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. Christ fully paid the price for our sin through His obedience and death. God credits His right standing before God to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation and thereby justifies them in His sight. Only those regenerated by the Holy Spirit receive Jesus Christ, trust in Him alone for salvation, and become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
   Jonah 2:9d; Jeremiah 23:6; John 1:12, 3:16-18, 36, 6:44-45, 65, 14:6, Acts 4:12, 10:43, 13:38-39; Romans 3:22-28, 4:5-8, 5:1,15-19, 8:30,1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 1:7, 2:7-10, Philippians 1:29, 3:9; Titus 3:5-7; James 2:17, 22-26.

7. WE BELIEVE in the water baptism, symbolizing our union in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baptism also unites us with fellow believers in the body of Christ.
   Genesis 17:4; Matthew 19:13, 28:19; Mark 1:4, 7:2-4, 10:13-16; Luke 7:30, 11:38, 18:15-17; John 3:5, 8; Acts 2:38-39, 41, 8:12-13, 36, 38, 10:47, 16:14-16; 22:16; Romans 4:11-12, 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 7:14, 12:13; Galatians 3:9-14, 25-28; Colossians 2:11-12; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:10-21.

8. WE BELIEVE in the observance of the Lord's Supper commemorating the sacrificial giving of our Savior's body and blood for all humankind. We believe the Lord gave us this supper for the spiritual nourishment of those who have confessed Christ as their Lord and Savior by faith alone. We believe those who take communion in an unworthy manner are eating and drinking judgment on themselves. Their ministers are responsible for overseeing the proper observance of the Lord's Supper.
   Matthew 7:6, 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24, 15:9; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 20:7 1 Corinthians 6:14-16, 10:10-17, 21, 11:23-29, 12:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6,14-15; Hebrews 7:23-24, 27, 9:22,

25-28, 10:10-14, 18.

9. WE BELIEVE in the personal, visible, and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ at the judgment of all people.
   Matthew 7:21-23, 13:40-42, 24:29-31, 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 1:11, 10:42; Romans 14:10b; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4; Revelation 19.

10. WE BELIEVE corporate worship through the faithful preaching of the Word, and singing to God's glory serves to call hearers to saving faith and is founded on Scripture alone. Our preaching aims to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, recognizing the controlling theme of all Scripture is Jesus Christ, for he is the supreme focus, substance, and goal of God's revelation. Throughout the Old and New Testament, the grace and mercy of our loving Father is displayed. We believe the preaching of the Word, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to be the primary means God uses to call sinners to salvation and to shape the saints more and more into His image. It serves to remind hearers of the depths of their own sin, which has corrupted their entire being, and the extraordinary justification that we received through faith alone. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, heart, mind, and wills are transformed. Worship should lead us to spiritual maturity that results in the stewardship of our lives, resources, and abilities to the glory of God.
    Deuteronomy 4:15-20, 6:13, 12:32; Nehemiah 10:29; Esther 4:16; Psalm 116:14; Ecclesiastes 5:4-5; Isaiah 19:21, 66:2; Joel 2:12, Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 4:9-10, 9:15, 13:19, 15:9, 28:19; Mark 1:15; Luke 4:16-17, 24:47; Acts 2:42, 5:42, 10:33, 11:18, 14:23, 15:21, 20:21; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; 2 Corinthians 1:23, 7:10, 9:7; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16, 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 2 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 4:2; James 1:22, 5:13; Revelation 1:3.

APPENDIX F

PROJECT GENESIS- CAMPUS MINISTRY AT WEST POINT

West Point Baptist Church & Baptist Student Union

In November of 2014, I transitioned from the active military to full-time campus minister and part-time Army chaplain. During that time as a full-time Baptist campus minister, I began the initial stages of what would become my thesis-project at Moffett Field. Part of the intial project was to restart a Southern Baptist-specific religious education program to cadets and also institute a collegiate church planting ministry at the United States Military Academy at West Point in New York. This initiative began in November of 2014 under direction from denominational personnel until the Academy ended the program in September of 2015.

During the initial stages of the project, I saw small transitions of people leaving the ministry due to incompatibility with our program, which is quite normal happenstance in transitional ministries. Thankfully, larger numbers of people poured into the ministry after we began to settle in. This was due to the nature and focus of what we were doing and was also due to the ministry's compatibility to cadet belief and practice. The success we had during that year led me to the conclusion that there is a place for doctrinal specific formation and worship within the military setting. Many of the cadets had strong denominational ties to Baptist churches across the United States. After just one year, we were reaching more cadets than it was before, when under a different ministry model, and blossomed into having regular attendance of between 30-50 cadets. As strong growth and ministry was just beginning to happen for Baptist work, we were asked to cease meeting and the reason given cited competing interests. This request halted

my original project, but I gained invaluable data and experience from this Baptist work. It helped me to see the value of doctrinally specific formation and worship.

During my time as Baptist Campus minister at West Point between 2014-2015, I implemented Baptist spiritual formation and worship. From 2014-2015, our Baptist specific ministry transitioned away from an unplanned, non-denominationally led, Christian campus ministry to a Baptist campus ministry. During this transition, our ministry lost some cadets who did not want to participate in a Baptist-specific ministry even though the name of the cadet ministry was Baptist Student Union (BSU). In fact, we gained almost three times the number of cadets who were seriously interested in Baptist ministry. This told me that cadets would attend a Christian ministry with a strong doctrinal/practical component just as much as more parachurch ministry organizations. We may have lost five to ten cadets to non-denominational preferences, but the three dozen cadets we gained came from our sister churches. In many cases, those Baptist cadets' home churches had indirectly been responsible for sending me to West Point to find, disciple, and lead their sons and daughters from an approved doctrinal position. Their home churches expect that they were to be given every opportunity to express themselves religiously, without binary choices, while also affording every opportunity for personal preference. Our ministry was primarily for Baptist cadets but welcomed any who wanted to join. We encouraged all who were interested to come no matter their religious background but did not compromise our positional theology for the sake of those non-Baptists. This earlier success helped to shape how I pursued Baptist formation at Moffett Field Chapel in 2019.

During my year of ministry of West Point, I intentionally taught Baptist distinctives and prioritized them to build a unified framework. Cadets' home churches supported my work wholeheartedly; some even sent missionary teams or funds which helped me see that local

churches can be great helpmeets in resourcing military ministry. Creating partnerships with denominational groups on installations could be a new way forward to meet religious needs. Those same local churches expect, and hope, cadets will be engaged in doctrinally sound teaching and ministry. Under this theory, Army chapels could find local church partners in greater numbers who could send on post support to sound spiritual formation and worship. This has been a priority of the Army Chiefs of Chaplains in recent years through the Garrison Chaplain's Religious Support Office. Pilot programs have started under the Army Garrison Chaplain's Office. These initiatives have focused on building bridges between local churches, chapel ministry, and soldiers and their families. This is an area where chapels can look to develop and to improve support.

Currently, many of the local ministry partners who are regular supporters on military installations are parachurch organizations. Parachurch organizations are not as doctrinally and practically specific as churches and denominations. These ministry partners usually represent a more general religious perspective focused on a population group like military personnel. While parachurch organizations usually have doctrinal and mission statements, core values, and codes of ethics, they sometimes do not perfectly represent the beliefs and values of the servicemember in key areas. Instead, they focus on a particular area of ministry such as small group discipleship. They encourage servicemembers to attend local churches and chapels. They usually do not observe all sacraments or ordinances of local churches. They oftentimes leave room for various interpretations so they may represent a big tent ministry approach. There are numerous parachurch organizations who have strong success in providing specific ministry approaches to specific groups of people without over-stressing doctrine or dogma. This ministry strategy of

parachurch organizations has worked since the 1960s or 1970s if they have remained strongly tied to local churches.

My year of ministry at West Point as a Baptist campus minister revealed to me that there is a religious need for specific spiritual formation and worship. As an aside, I planned to have stayed longer at West Point to carry out this amazing ministry paradigm, but we faced intense opposition from individuals who wanted to keep cadets in only several spheres of religious influence: the chapel, the chaplains, and selected parachurch groups. This type of control seems similar to the old chapel model which only allowed cadets to attend one of three chapel services until the early 1970s. Contrastingly, the Baptist Student Union and its cadet service called West Point Baptist Church, which I pastored as a volunteer with status on post, was partially collegiate church planting, campus ministry, chaplaincy, and missions. Doctrinally, it viewed the importance of taking cadets through the ministry of the local church and also teaching the full council of Scripture, including tithing. Not always are religious needs necessarily met for all Protestant Christians within the military, especially those who are taught in their local home churches the importance of doctrinally sound teaching and religious practices. These individuals are looking for something that agrees with their own personal spiritual formation and discipleship. This is the role of every chaplain to help soldiers and their families find the kind of religious provision they are looking for.

That year further demonstrated, anecdotally, how an intentional ministry strategy led to increased religious engagement within the group for which it was tailored. It also indicated that there are, indeed, civilian ministry partners (churches) who desire to support ministry to military personnel. Local churches are willing to resource, send, and train military personnel. In addition, for any losses due to incompatibility or disagreement during the implementation of this strategy,

there was, and is, even more potential for greater religious engagement. Army chapels have the potential for greater engagement among the military personnel stationed at the Army post. The Academy utilized a Sunday School program which collected various belief groups together for spiritual formation. This approach is not currently in operation evenly across most Army chapels today but could easily become a standard in the future. Instead, most dynamic Army chapel services rely on parachurch groups and Army chaplains to provide a non-denominational style approach catering to a generalized Christianity. This approach is insufficient as it stands. West Point's Sunday School program provided an interesting potential approach to religious engagement to specific religious groups within Protestant Christianity that might be applied across the Army chapel system.

Also, both West Point Baptist Church (on campus church) and Baptist Student Union (BSU) from 1971 until 2009 and again from 2014-2015 presents a strong Southern Baptist strategy for engaging soldiers in authentic ministry from the doctrinal and practical position those soldiers expect and need. Between these several examples and many other examples across the military, there is hope in future ministry paradigms to bring about a renaissance in Army chapels and their religious programs for deep engagement and growth.

Cadet Sunday School at West Point

At Cadet Chapel, there is a long history for conducting Sunday School breakout groups in conjunction with Protestant chapel service. The smaller groups of cadets met for spiritual formation. They then gathered in larger community for corporate worship. I saw this model, firsthand, in my time as a Baptist campus minister at West Point where I served the Southern Baptists at the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Southern Baptists chose to break from

this chapel's Sunday School program to form its own worship and spiritual formation in 1971 under Reverend Alton Harpe. He had over two decades of success in gathering Southern Baptist cadets and cadre (officer instructors) for spiritual formation and worship. I, personally, restarted the ministry Reverend Harpe began in 1971. We gathered cadets under a defined spiritual formation and worship model.

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